Report on the

ROUNDTABLE ON INTERNATIONAL RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

March 17, 1999
Lester B. Pearson Building
Ottawa

Prepared by

The Religious and Interreligious Affairs Committee
Canadian Jewish Congress

for

The Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

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ROUNDTABLE ON RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

Presented by The Religious and Interreligious Affairs Committee,
Canadian Jewish Congress

With support from The Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development,
Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade

March 17, 1999
Lester B. Pearson Building
Ottawa, Ontario

9:00 -10:15	Greetings and Introductory Remarks from Chair Rabbi Reuven Bulka
	Featured Speaker Paul Marshall "Canadian Policy Alternatives for Promoting Religious Freedom"
	Questions and Answers
10:15-10:30	Coffee Break
10:30-12:30	Panel Discussion "Case Studies in Religious Persecution"
	Panellists: Susanne Tamas on the Baha'is in Iran Ronald Schwartz on Buddhists in Tibet Mel Middleton on Christians in Sudan
	Questions and Answers
12:30-1:00	Keynote Address Introduction of Keynote Speaker by CJC National President Moshe Ronen
	Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, P.C., M.P.
1:15-2:00	Lunch
2:00-3:30	Roundtable Discussion. Brief Presentations
3:30-3:40	Coffee Break
3:40-4:40	Discussion on Policy Recommendations
4:40-4:45	Closing Remarks

Introduction

Persecution of religious minorities in an increasing number of countries is a matter about which there has been a growing awareness and international concern.

Given its history and experience, the Jewish people, understandably, have a particular sensitivity and empathy for people persecuted for their faith, and zero tolerance for persecution. Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC), as part of its general mandate, advocates for this and other human rights causes, fights against prejudice, and strives to promote inter-faith and inter-ethnic understanding.

With the situation for many religious communities growing worse, we at the Religious and Interreligious Affairs Committee of CJC believed the time was right to assemble a roundtable to address the topic of religious persecution.

A roundtable would provide an excellent opportunity for different groups – including faith groups and human rights NGOs - to share information and to possibly form strategic coalitions. We have learned that building coalitions is an excellent method for effecting change and a forum such as this could act as a catalyst. This roundtable was set up to be the beginning of a process and a springboard for other follow-up activities. We were fortunate to be able to secure some of the foremost experts in the field as speakers and panellists.

The process took on added significance when the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development agreed to participate and support the initiative. That the Minister of Foreign Affairs himself addressed the roundtable further attests to the fact that he and officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs view this matter seriously.

We are therefore confident that this report, complete with its recommendations, will be given its due consideration. CJC is grateful for the assistance of the Centre, financial and otherwise, without which the roundtable could not have taken place.

Certainly the definition of religious persecution stretches over a long continuum but this roundtable focused primarily on countries wherein persecution is of a gross systematic nature. That includes widespread acts of torture, imprisonment, abduction, rape, enslavement and killing.

Keeping in mind that the purpose of the roundtable was to develop policy recommendations for the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, the discussion centred on instances of state-sanctioned persecution. By definition, this occurs in countries where it is the government and government authorities that are committing the atrocities or, in other cases, where the government is not making a serious or sustained effort to prevent these practices.

All participants were in agreement that Canada's status as a middle power; its reputation as an "honest broker"; and its membership in the UN Security Council are all factors which can play a role in advancing the cause of religious freedom internationally.

On such human security issues as the campaign against land mines, we learned that ministerial statements, political pressure and the use of moral suasion are important tools in both raising public awareness and effecting change. With its moral influence on the international stage, we are confident that Canada can play an important role in helping to eradicate the scourge of state-sanctioned religious persecution.

The recommendations that appear at the end of this report represent a consensus of the participants. Although there was widespread agreement on many basic issues, it was impossible to achieve unanimity on a number of others, that were equally important.

Not wishing to exclude any potentially good idea that could not be unanimously agreed on, we decided to offer each participant the opportunity to independently submit their own recommendations reflecting the views of their organization. We believe this gives the report more substance while considering the sensibilities of each individual participant. These submissions can be found in the report's appendix.

From the outset, this endeavour has benefited from the full support of CJC, its executive vice-president Jack Silverstone, and president Moshe Ronen, for which we are all grateful.

The Ottawa Advocacy Centre of Canadian Jewish Congress has been instrumental in this entire process. The efforts of Eric Vernon and Andra Ginsburg are greatly appreciated.

Particularly are we indebted to Ron Singer for his diligence in arranging the conference and for putting together, in a relatively short time, such a cogent report.

We are all of one mind that what was begun on March 17, 1999 must not end with this report. This report should serve as a catalyst for strengthening our collective resolve to address the most pressing issues facing us, and doing so together.

Rabbi Reuven P. Bulka
Chair, Religious and Interreligious Affairs Committee
Canadian Jewish Congress

SPEAKERS' BIOGRAPHIES

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, P.C., M.P.

Minister of Foreign Affairs

Lloyd Axworthy was appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs on January 25, 1996. Mr. Axworthy served as Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification from November 1993 until January 1996. During this time, he served on the Social Development Policy and Economic Development Policy Committees of Cabinet. He retains membership on the latter.

First elected to Parliament in May 1979, Mr. Axworthy was appointed to Cabinet as Minister of Employment and Immigration (1980-83). He also served as Minister Responsible for the Status of Women (1980-82) and as Minister of Transport (1983-84).

After the 1984 election, Mr. Axworthy served as Official Opposition Critic for Regional and Industrial Expansion and the Canadian Wheat Board (1984) and as Trade Critic and Deputy Critic for External Affairs (1985-88). He was appointed Liberal Critic for Trade (February 1989) and Chairman of both the Liberal Trade Task Force and the Liberal Caucus Economic Policy Committee. In September 1990, Mr. Axworthy was appointed Liberal Critic for External Affairs and Chairman of the Liberal Caucus Committee on External Affairs and National Defence. He was nominated Vice-Chairman of the House Standing Committee on External Affairs and International Trade in May 1991.

Mr. Axworthy is a graduate of Princeton University, where he obtained an MA in political science in 1963 and a PhD in 1972. He was a professor of political science at the University of Winnipeg from 1965 to 1967, and from 1969 to 1979. He also served as Director of the University of Winnipeg's Institute of Urban Studies from 1969 to 1973

Paul Marshall

Paul Marshall is a Senior Fellow at the Center for Religious Freedom, Freedom House, Washington D.C. He is also Adjunct Professor of Philosophy at the Free University of Amsterdam; Adjunct Fellow at the Claremont Institute, California and Adjunct Professor at the Fuller Theological Seminary, Pasadena. Prior to his current positions he was Academic Dean, Institute for Christian Studies, Toronto.

Marshall is the author and editor of 16 books and booklets including his most recent best-seller Their Blood Cries Out, a survey of religious persecution world-wide. He has also published numerous scholarly and popular articles and dozens of briefs to government bodies. He has given presentations before the Advisory Committee to the U.S. Secretary of State on Religious Freedom Abroad and the Helsinki Commission of the U.S. Congress. Marshall has also lectured on human rights in many countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Australia.

Mel Middleton

Mel Middleton is currently the director of Freedom Quest International, a non-profit, humanitarian and human rights organization based in Calgary, Alberta. He helped set up and co-ordinate the Network for East African Relief (NEAR), a consortium of agencies which brought humanitarian supplies to "restricted" areas of Sudan, such as the Nuba Mountains. He served as an advisor to the Canadian High Commission in Nairobi and the Canadian Embassy in Addis Ababa, on issues pertaining to Southern Sudan, Uganda and Somalia.

Mr. Middleton was born and raised in Ethiopia and has lived over 26 years in the Horn of Africa region. He has lived in Sudan for more than 10 years - both in the north and the south.

Ronald Schwartz

Ronald D. Schwartz is Professor of Sociology at Memorial University of Newfoundland. He is the author of Circle of Protest: Political Ritual In the Tibetan Uprising (Columbia University Press 1994) and has written extensively on the social and political background to the current unrest in Tibet. He has conducted research both inside of Tibet and with Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal. In 1992-1993 he was a Research Fellow at the Centre of Asian Studies, University of Hong Kong.

In addition to his extensive publication over the past 10 years on human rights in Tibet, Professor Schwartz has attended many conferences and seminars on the subject in Europe, Asia and the U.S. both as a participant and as an invited lecturer.

Susanne Tamas

Susanne Tamas is Director of Governmental Relations for the Baha'i Community of Canada. Her work involves the defence of Baha'is suffering persecution, such as the Baha'i community in Iran, and collaboration with government and national NGO's located in Ottawa on three thematic areas - advancement of women, human rights education and sustainable development.

Susanne has lived and worked across Canada as a social worker, counsellor, elementary and junior high school teacher and college administrator. She especially treasures the many years which she spent in the Yukon and Northwest Territories. Susanne's travels to South America, her experiences in West Africa and her studies of citizenship in a plural society have confirmed her commitment to working with others to promote unity in diversity.

List of Participants

Lajos Arendas (Department of Foreign Affairs & International Trade)

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy, P.C., M.P. (Minister of Foreign Affairs)

David Bazak (Rapporteur)

Michael Beigleman (Canadian Jewish Congress)

Rabbi Reuven Bulka (Canadian Jewish Congress)

Helen Chisolm (InterAmicus)

Reverend James Christie (Southminster United Church)

Bruce Clemenger (Evangelical Fellowship of Canada)

Funda Dominic (African South Sudanese Canadian Assoc.)

Sam Fanous (Canadian Coptic Association)

Gerald Filson (Bahá'í Community of Canada)

Dani Fine (Canadian Jewish Congress)

Raymonde Folco (Member of Parliament)

Sister Donna Geernaert, s.c. (Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops)

Andra Ginsburg (Canadian Jewish Congress)

Kathryn Graham (MakePeace International)

Bonnie Greene (United Church of Canada)

Eric Hoskins (Office of the Minister of Foreign Affairs)

Cheryl Hotchkiss (Amnesty International)

Paul Johnson (Open Doors with Brother Andrew)

Shadab Khokher (International Christian AWAZ)

Nabil Malek (Canadian Egyptian Organization of Human Rights)

Paul Marshall (Freedom House)

Marion Mayman (Canadian Jewish Congress)

Patrick Mendes (Canorient Christian Association)

Mel Middleton (Freedom Quest International)

Bob Mills (Member of Parliament)

I. David Morrison (University of Prince Edward Island)

Natalie L. Mychajlyszyn (Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development)

Johanna Myyra (Human Rights Internet)

Mubarak Nazir (Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam)

Máire O'Brien (Canada Asia Working Group)

Glenn Penner (The Voice of the Martyrs)

Manuel Prutschi (Canadian Jewish Congress)

Harry Qualman (UN Association of Canada)

Maher Rizkalla (Canadian Coptic Association)

Moshe Ronen (Canadian Jewish Congress)

Josh Rotblatt (Canadian Jewish Congress)

Thubten Samdup (Canada Tibet Committee)

Les Scheininger (Canadian Jewish Congress)

Ronald Schwartz (Canada Tibet Committee)

Jack Silverstone (Canadian Jewish Congress)

Ron Singer (Canadian Jewish Congress)

Susanne Tamas (Bahá'í Community of Canada)

Kathy Vandergrift (World Vision Canada)

Eric Vernon (Canadian Jewish Congress)

Gary Walsh (Evangelical Fellowship of Canada)

The Very Rev. The Hon. Lois Wilson (Senate of Canada)

Laurie Wiseberg (Human Rights Internet)

Emad Youssef (Canadian Coptic Association)

SPEAKERS AND PANELLISTS' PRESENTATIONS

The following presentations were made by various speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views of Canadian Jewish Congress.

Paul Marshall
Senior Fellow
Center for Religious Freedom, Freedom House

At the end of 1997, former executive editor of the New York Times, A.M. Rosenthal confessed "Early this year I realized that in decades of reporting, writing or assigning stories on human rights, I rarely touched on one of the most important. Political human rights, legal, civil and press rights, emphatically often; but the right to worship where and how God or conscience leads, almost never." While Rosenthal has changed dramatically on this score, the pattern he describes pervades our culture.

One main cause of our ignorance is what I call "secular myopia," by which I mean "an introverted, parochial inability even to see, much less understand, the role of religion in human life." This myopia is widespread amongst "the chattering classes" and is particularly prevalent amongst journalists and political commentators and analysts.

As Edward Luttwak has written: "Policy makers, diplomats, journalists, and scholars who are ready to over interpret economic causality, who are apt to dissect social differentiations ever more finely, and who will minutely categorize political affiliations, are still in the habit of disregarding the role of religion...in explaining politics and even in reporting their concrete modalities." ("The Missing Dimension" in D. Johnston and C. Sampson, eds., *Religion: The Missing Dimension of Statecraft*).

REDEFINING RELIGION

Religion as "Ethnicity"

Religion is also ignored even in day to day description. When in 1997 Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad railed against speculators with the words "we are Muslims, and the Jews are not happy to see the Muslims progress...," the *Los Angeles Times* described him as "race-obsessed." Perhaps the *Times* took it's cue from descriptions of the former Yugoslavia wherein "Bosnian Muslims" and war between Orthodox, Catholics and Muslims is routinely described as "ethnic." We now use the term "*ethnic* cleansing" to describe attacks on Muslims.

Religion as Irrationality

Our press coverage and political analysis has an introverted focus on a type of Enlightenment culture, as though this constituted the common opinion of humankind, or the common opinion of *reasonable* humankind, or at least the common opinion of Americans. Consequently, movements overseas are assimilated to Enlightenment categories. Hence, Islamic or Hindu militants are described as "right-wing," whatever that might mean. But most such activists have detailed proposals for economic controls of a kind usually thought of as "left-wing". And what is a "right-wing" or "left-wing" view of plans to build a Hindu temple on the site of the Babri mosque or a Jewish Third Temple on the site of the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem? Neither of these schemes has anything to do with categories of left and right: their meaning can only be grasped by understanding their religious context. And this is doubly urgent since either of these

projects could precipitate nuclear war.

When the vocabulary of left and right has run its tired course, we are left with that old standby, "fundamentalist" - a word dredged from the American past and of dubious provenance and meaning even there. What it means for Buddhism, Hinduism, or Islam is hard to understand. Using the term *fundamentalist* is simply a sign of intellectual laziness: a refusal to take seriously what people say they actually believe. If what they believe does not easily assimilate to Enlightenment categories then we assume they must simply be "irrational." Consequently "fundamentalist" is now shorthand for religious obsessive, someone to be categorized rather than heard, observed rather than comprehended, dismissed rather than read.

TAKING RELIGION SERIOUSLY

Religion and War

If we *do* take religion seriously in international affairs, then we will learn a great deal about war, about democracy and about freedom of all kinds.

It was pointed out by religion scholars long before Samuel Huntington's recent important work on the "Clash of Civilizations" that chronic armed conflict in the world is concentrated on the margins of the traditional religions, especially the boundaries of the Islamic world. The Middle East, the southern Sahara, the Balkans, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and South Asia are where Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism and Hinduism intersect. They are also the sites of most wars in the last 50 years.

The point is not *why* people fight, but *where* they fight. These are not explicitly religious wars. But since religion shapes culture, people at these boundaries have different histories and different views of human life, and are more likely to oppose one another. Regardless of the varied reasons for conflict, these are the areas where conflict likely occurs. They are religious fault zones, and hence sites of political instability.

Religion as Sublimated Anxiety

When ethnicity and psychology fail to subsume religion, the alternative is to treat it, in quasi-Marxist fashion, as the sublimation of drives which can *really* be explained by poverty, economic change or the stresses of modernity. Of course these play a role: no part of human life is sealed off from any other. But all too often what we encounter is an *a priori* methodological commitment to treat religion as secondary, as an evanescent and derivative phenomenon which can be explained but never be used to explain.

In 1992 the Chinese press noted that "the church played an important role in the change" in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union and warned "If China does not want such a scene to be repeated in its land, it must strangle the baby while it is still in the manger." "Underground" or "house" church leaders consistently report that the current government crackdown is due to fears prompted by religious events in the former Soviet bloc. Even Chinese government documents actually implementing the crackdown state that one of their purposes is to prevent "the changes

that occurred in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe" (From "Opinions Concerning the Implementation of the Special Class-Struggle Involving the Suppression of Catholic and Protestant Illegal Activities According to Law," Tong Xiang, Zhejiang province, February, 1997).

Religion and the Growth of Democracy

This also suggests that people interested in democracy should attend more to religion. For example, the attention to China's courageous pro-democracy activists is certainly deserved, but it must be remembered that their following is quite small. Yet there is little attention to China's dissident churches, which at a conservative estimate number some 25 million (apart from 15 million in official churches) and are growing at 10 - 15% a year. The *Far East Economic Review*, in a 1997 cover story entitled "God is Back", reported one Beijing official as saying "If God had the face of a seventy year old man, we wouldn't care if he was back. But he has the face of millions of 20-year-olds, so we are worried." The rapid growth of the only nation-wide movement in China not under government control merits *political* attention.

.RELIGION AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Current Trends

Apart from the Balkan conflicts, the rise of Welfare in Turkey, the BJP in India, and the growth of radical Islamicism, the following religious trends also merit political reflection:

(1) The rapid growth of charismatic Protestantism in Latin America, and the now companion growth of charismatic Catholicism. As Cambridge sociologist David Martin has shown, these indigenous developments are one of the largest religious changes of the century, produce personal reform, and provide a major impetus toward entrepreneurial activity.

(2) The pattern of violence and warfare along the sub-Saharan boundary from Nigeria to Ethiopia. This traces a Christian/Muslim divide.

(3) The rapid growth of Christianity in Korea (now 25% of the population), China (a minimum of 40 million, up from 1 million in 1980), Taiwan and Indonesia.

(4) Tensions in Nigeria and Indonesia. There is widespread religious violence in the north and central regions of Nigeria, with several thousand dead in recent years, and fears that there could be a religious war. In Indonesia, rising religious strife precedes and has some separate dynamics from recent anti-Chinese violence: 100 churches have been burned in Java alone in the last 15 months, most of them *not* ethnic Chinese. It threatens to undermine what has been one of the world's best examples of inter-religious toleration and cooperation. In both of these regional powers there is the possibility of instability and violence that could spread far beyond the religious communities themselves.

(5) The current exodus of Christians from the Middle-East -- some two million in the last five years. Currently some 3% of Palestinians are Christians compared to an estimated 25% fifty years ago. Similar movements have taken place out of Syria, Lebanon, Turkey and Iraq.

(6) The emergence of Orthodoxy as a unifying symbol in Russia, the Balkans and parts of the former Soviet Union.

(7) The increasing prominence of religion in the conflicts between India and Pakistan, now enhanced by nuclear weapons.

I am not making the absurd suggestion that religion, apart from other cultural, ethnic, economic, political, or strategic elements is the only or the key factor: societies are complex. But I am saying that it is equally absurd to examine a political order *without* attending to the role of religion. We need to deal consistently with religion as an important independent factor, and analyses which ignore religious dynamics should be inherently suspect.

In the field of human rights, we must elevate concern for religious freedom. This is not a parochial matter: it is historically the first freedom in the growth of human rights and it is the very first freedom in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Such freedom may at times have more to do with the growth of democracy than might a direct focus on political activity itself.

A human rights/religious freedom policy is extremely difficult, of course. While all human rights pressures make realists nervous, religion carries the additional burdens of touching on very deep seated commitments, of facing confused domestic claims about "separation of church and state" and fears overseas that the U.S. is an imperial "Christian" power. But for anyone concerned with freedom and democracy this is no reason to neglect the matter

Susanne Tamas
Director of Government Relations
Baha'i Community of Canada

Speaking Notes:

Religious intolerance, and the religious persecution which it spawns, are increasingly recognised as significant obstacles to the maintenance of human security - to the establishment of a just and peaceable society.

In October 1998, Minister Axworthy announced, at the 50th Anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights Conference held in Edmonton, Alberta, that religious intolerance had been adopted as a priority thematic concern. DFAIT/NGO consultations held March 4th and 5th 1999 provided a first opportunity for NGOs to explore this thematic area with officials of Foreign Affairs. Today we will take that consultation another step forward.

The persecution of the Bahá'í minority in Iran, is a clear example of the recrudescence of state sponsored religious persecution. Bahá'ís in Iran share the same language, ethnicity and culture as their co-citizens. They are persecuted simply because they are Bahá'í.

The Bahá'í Community of Canada and the Bahá'í International Community believe that it has been through the pressure of international attention, from the Commission on Human Rights resolutions to the General Assembly resolutions, as well as multilateral and bilateral interventions by governments such as Canada, that the persecutions have been moderated.

We will therefore, discuss the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran within the framework of the International Human Rights instruments and the mechanisms and special procedures that are invoked in an attempt to restore the human rights of the Bahá'ís in Iran and to bring about the emancipation of the Bahá'ís and other religious minorities in that country.

Hopefully the insights which this approach to the topic yields will be applicable to other similar situations and will help us to identify strategies and processes that we might recommend to the Department of Foreign Affairs for its consideration as it develops policies to address this area of growing concern.

For those of you who are unfamiliar with the Bahá'í Faith, a few words about its origin and central teachings.

Origins and History

- Bahá'í Faith is an independent world religion- originated in Iran (Persia) in1840's
- Founder and adherents persecuted as heretics and exiled - first to Baghdad, eventually to Akka in Palestine (1868), then part of the Ottoman Empire
- Bahá'u'lláh, the Prophet-founder of the Bahá'í faith, imprisoned or under house arrest in Akka until 1892

Bahá'ís World-wide

- Bahá'í international community = five million
- It represents 2,112 ethnic and tribal groups who live in over 121,000 localities in 190 independent countries and 45 dependent territories and overseas departments
- Its membership cuts across boundaries of class and race
- It governs itself through local and national elected bodies known as Spiritual Assemblies
- Its international centre and the seat of its world governing council (the Universal House of Justice) - located in the Holy Land, in Haifa, Israel as specified by Bahá'u'lláh

Bahá'ís in Canada

- Bahá'í Community of Canada celebrated 100th anniversary in 1998
- approximately 28,000 members living in 1,380 localities with 326 elected local spiritual assemblies
- National Spiritual Assembly was established in 1948; incorporated by Act of Parliament in 1949

Principal Teachings

- Central to Bahá'í teachings:
  - concept of one God
  - major religions established progressively by divine messengers, or teachers
  - spiritual essence of major religions is same - social teachings change according to needs
  - time has come for recognition of: unity of the human race, establishment of equality of women and men, elimination of extremes of wealth and poverty, realisation of world peace
- Bahá'ís are striving to:
  - understand and implement spiritual and moral teachings in personal and community lives
  - support establishment of international structures: foundation for global unity

Basis for the Persecution of Bahá'ís in Iran

- Muslims regard Muhammad as 'Seal of the Prophets'
- Many Muslims believe that with Muhammad divine revelation ceased; the only true religions are Islam and those which pre-date it
- Bahá'í Faith teaches that divine revelation is continuous: all great religions are valid and represent successive stages in the spiritual evolution of human society
- This evolution will continue into the future with the advent of new Messengers, or Manifestations of God
- Islamic fundamentalists in Iran regard Bahá'ís as heretics and those who convert to the Bahá'í faith as apostates for whom Islamic law prescribes the death penalty
- Bahá'í World Centre located in Haifa, Israel - regarded as evidence that the Bahá'í Faith is not a religion but a political movement with Zionist sympathies
- State of Israel established decades after the Haifa/Akka area designated Bahá'í world centre
- Some Bahá'í teachings and practices are rejected by, arouse anger of, Islamic fundamentalists, for example:
  - equality of women and men
  - administration of Bahá'í community by elected bodies
  - abrogation of a professional clergy

- Religious and state authorities promote prejudice based on false allegations such as espionage and scapegoat the Bahá'í community for political reasons

International human rights instruments and special procedures that address the matter of religious persecution or, more positively stated, Freedom of Religion and Belief include:

- **The Universal Declaration of Human Rights 1948, article 18**
- **The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights 1966, article 18**
- **The Declaration on the Elimination of all Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief** (Declaration) adopted in 1981 which, while not legally binding, carries significant moral weight. Its provisions are reflected in the -
- **General Comment on Article 18 of the International Covenant** adopted by the Human Rights Committee in 1993. Several paragraphs of the General Comment have particular relevance to the situation of the Bahá'ís, who are the largest religious minority in the Islamic Republic of Iran.

  Par. 2 – The terms religion and belief are to be broadly construed. Article 18 is not limited in its application to traditional religions or to religions and beliefs with institutional characteristics or practices analogous to those of traditional religions. The Committee therefore views with concern any tendency to discriminate against any religion or belief for any reason, including the fact that they are newly established, or represent religious minorities that may be the subject of hostility on the part of a predominant religious community.

  Par. 9 – The fact that a religion is recognised as a state religion or that it is established as official or traditional or that its followers comprise a majority of the population shall not result in any impairment of the enjoyment of any of the rights under the Covenant, including articles 18 and 27, nor in any discrimination against adherents to other religions or non-believers...

These three documents form the context within which the Special Rapporteur for Religious Intolerance assesses the situation of individuals and religious communities within any given state. They also provide the categories in which violations of fundamental human rights are reported. Special Representative Maurice Copithorne and Special Rapporteurs on Religious Intolerance, Galindo Pohl and more recently Professor A. Amor, have submitted to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights and to the General Assembly, reports on Iran which describe State actions taken against the Bahá'í minority in that country. These actions take the form of legislation, directives, regulations, practices and acts that are contrary to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and constitute:

Violations of the principle of non-discrimination (Article 2 – Declaration)
Discrimination against Bahá'ís in Iran, by reason of their faith, takes the form of denial of the most fundamental of civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights:

- Non-recognition of Bahá'í marriage
- Denial of the right to inheritance – refusal to issue a probate, denial of Bahá'í heirs
- Refusal to issue passports or issuance with unwarranted restrictions – whether the application is made in Iran or abroad by Bahá'ís wishing to visit family in Iran.
- Denial of access to post-secondary education
- Refusal of legal status, Bahá'ís are identified as members of a misguided group

- Dismissal from government positions
- Denial of access to certain professions
- Annulment of Business Licences by the Department of Properties
- Denial of pensions
- Eviction of Bahá'ís from their homes and properties

Violations of the principle of tolerance

- Prejudice has been fomented by the clergy / government amongst the population to the extent that the word Bahá'í has become a curse.

Violations of the freedom to manifest one's religion or belief in worship, observance, practice, and teaching

Articles cited below are from the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination based on Religion or Belief.

- *Article 6-e establishes the right to teach a religion or belief in places suitable for these purposes.*
  Teaching the Bahá'í Faith is forbidden.
- *Article 6-b establishes the right to establish and maintain appropriate charitable and humanitarian institutions.*
  The assets, properties and buildings of Bahá'í charitable and humanitarian foundations have been seized and no restitution or compensation has been provided.
- *Article 6-a establishes the right to worship or assemble in connection with a religion or belief and to establish and maintain places for these purposes.*
  Bahá'í places of worship have been confiscated and destroyed and graveyards appropriated and desecrated.
- *Article 6-g provides for the right to train, appoint, elect or designate by succession appropriate leaders called for by the requirements and standards of any religion or belief.*
  The administrative institutions of the Bahá'ís of Iran have been banned. The Bahá'í Faith has no clergy. Its elected local, national and international administrative bodies, instituted by the Founder of the faith, provide guidance to the Bahá'ís and serve as links in a world-wide organised community. Denial of the right to elect its local and national administrative bodies as required by Bahá'í teachings, makes it impossible for Bahá'ís in Iran to fulfil their religious obligations and deprives them of the heart of their community life.
- *Article 6-i, provides for the right to establish and maintain communications with individuals and communities in matters of religion and belief at the national and international levels.*
  Communication by the Bahá'ís of Iran with Bahá'ís and Bahá'í institutions in other countries results in charges of espionage and crimes against national security, particularly when that communication is with the Bahá'í World Centre, which is located in Haifa, Israel.

Violations of the right of the child to have access to education in religion or belief

Article 5 states that every child shall enjoy the right to have access to education in the matter of religion or belief in accordance with the wishes of his parents or, as the case may be, legal guardians, and shall not be compelled to receive teaching on religion or belief against the wishes of his parents or legal guardians.

Bahá'í children are required to attend Islamic schools where many excel in Islamic studies. Bahá'í communities organise informal classes for their children and youth to instruct them in the teachings of their faith.

Bahá'ís have been arrested and two are currently serving three year jail terms for providing moral education classes to Bahá'í youth. The 12 youth arrested with their teachers were given five year suspended sentences and were warned that they would serve their terms if they ever attended another moral education class.

Violations of freedom of thought, conscience, religion or belief

The Human Rights Committee in paragraph 3 of its General Comment on Article 18 states: *In accordance with articles 18.2 and 17, no one can be compelled to reveal his thoughts or adherence to a religion or belief* and in paragraph 5 states: *Article 18.2 bars coercion that would impair the right to have or adopt a religion or belief, including the use of threat of physical force or penal sanctions to compel believers or non-believers to adhere to their religious beliefs and congregations, to recant their religion or belief or to convert.*

- Bahá'ís arrested for Bahá'í activities are routinely asked to sign a statement in which they recant their faith in order to be released. Bahá'ís executed by the Islamic Republic of Iran have been told that if they recant their lives will be spared.

- Most government application forms in Iran have a "religion" column which must be completed and "Bahá'í" is not among the four Faiths accepted. Bahá'ís are thus denied access to those goods, services and employment opportunities afforded to all other Iranian citizens.

- Converting from Islam to another religion in Iran is considered apostasy, a crime punishable by death. Of the six Bahá'ís under death sentences in Iran, two are charged with apostasy.

Violations of the right to life, physical integrity, and health

- Forced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, imprisonment and executions. Since 1979, more than 200 Bahá'ís have been killed and another 15 have disappeared and are presumed dead. Arbitrary arrests continue, with a marked increase in short term arrests over the past three years in various areas of Iran. More than 200 Bahá'ís have been detained for periods of 48 hours to six months. Since November 1997, 51 Bahá'ís have been arrested and 41 released. 16 Bahá'ís remain in prison, by reason of their membership and activities in the Bahá'í Faith.

- Bahá'ís in Iran, remain, in law, unprotected infidels and have faced the persecution described above without legal recourse. They are routinely denied due process: written charges and judgements, legal representation.

- The Law of Qisas (Retaliation) and Diyah (Compensation) are not applied if victim is a Bahá'í.

These human rights violations are not the arbitrary work of fanatical individuals. Rather, they are elements in a co-ordinated campaign waged by the authorities in Iran to block the progress and development of the Bahá'í Faith in Iran through the implementation of policies identified in a

secret Iranian government document signed by Ayatollah Khamenei in 1991 and published by the United Nations in 1993.

International Response

Since 1985, the United Nations General Assembly has adopted resolutions critical of Iran's human rights abuses. These resolutions have made specific mention of the situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran, and in 1997 and 1998 called for the implementation of the recommendations made by Special Rapporteur with respect to the restoration of the rights of the Bahá'ís in Iran leading to the full emancipation of the Bahá'ís and other religious minorities in that country. Special Representative Maurice Copithorne in his most recent report to the United Nations, while noting some improvements in some human rights areas, commented that the situation of the Bahá'ís in Iran had not improved, and perhaps it had worsened.

With the attention of the International Community increasingly focused on areas where there has been some improvement in the human rights situation in Iran, there is the risk that its commitment to continue bring forward and support an Iran Resolution and to call upon that country to implement Professor Amor's recommendations may weaken.

Canada's Actions

Canada was the first country in the world to draw attention to the severe persecutions suffered by the Bahá'í Community of Iran when, in June 1981, the House of Commons of the federal government passed a strongly worded resolution condemning the persecution occurring in Iran under the Islamic Revolution.

Canada's Department of Immigration led the world in admitting and resettling Bahá'í refugees who were able to escape from Iran during the early years of the Islamic Revolution. Several other countries followed Canada's lead, and together they welcomed more than 10,000 Bahá'ís from Iran.

Over the past several years the Canadian Government, through its Department of Foreign Affairs, has been an outspoken defender of the human rights of the Bahá'ís of Iran, voting for strong resolutions both at the General Assembly of the United Nations and at the annual sessions of the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva, often drawing attention to the plight of the Bahá'ís in verbal statements. On October 7th, 1998, Members of Parliament unanimously adopted an all-party motion calling upon the "government of Iran to end their oppression of the Bahá'í community". This action, following quickly on the heels of press releases from the Minister of Foreign Affairs Lloyd Axworthy calling for an "end to Iran's oppression of the Bahá'ís" demonstrated, once again, Canada's moral leadership.

Partnership

Bahá'í communities around the world have made efforts to provide accurate and timely information to their respective governments and to international agencies to assist them in their responsibility to implement, monitor and bring about State compliance with universal human rights standards - including the right to freedom of religion and belief.

Representatives of the Bahá'í Community of Canada enjoy regular and substantive meetings and communications with senior officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.
We are deeply appreciative of the atmosphere of trust, partnership and mutual respect that has characterised our relationship with the Department of Foreign Affairs.

We attribute this positive working relationship, in large part, to the willingness and desire of DFAIT officials to receive information from and consult with NGOs and Faith communities on foreign policy and initiatives of mutual concern and to the care that the Bahá'í community has taken to ensure that all the information provided is absolutely accurate, timely and relevant.

The recognition of our respective and complementary roles and responsibilities has also contributed to the development of our very positive and effective working relationship. It is the responsibility of the Bahá'í Community of Canada to offer information and advice and to identify our hoped for outcomes - in this case the full restoration of human rights to the Bahá'ís of Iran and the emancipation of the Bahá'í community in that country. It is DFAIT's responsibility to take the Foreign policy decisions that it feels will be most effective in securing the human rights of the Bahá'ís of Iran.

The major challenges facing Canada and the United Nations vis-à-vis Religious Persecution could be broadly described as follows:

1. to identify strategies which support and lend weight to UN Human Rights mechanisms bringing about compliance with international human rights standards as described in International Human Rights Instruments; and,

2. to investigate and to develop the strategies, policies and programs to realise the goals as stated in the preamble to the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Based on Religion and Belief:
   - *to promote understanding, tolerance and respect in matters relating to freedom of religion and belief; and,*
   - *to realise the capacity of freedom of religion and belief to contribute to the attainment of the goals of world peace, social justice, and friendship among peoples and to the elimination of ideologies or practices of colonialism and racial discrimination.*

This afternoon we will consult with a view to developing recommendations for policy and processes that will assist DFAIT, NGOs and Faith communities to meet these challenges. It is my hope this discussion of the persecution of the Bahá'ís in Iran has not only acquainted you with the nature of the state sanctioned human rights violations suffered by Iran's largest religious minority but has also described the framework of International human rights instruments and mechanisms within which violations of the principles of freedom of religion and belief are addressed, wherever they occur and that this will be useful to us in our deliberations this afternoon.

I would also like to refer to the findings of the President's Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad which was established in the United States to study the question of Religious Freedom and make recommendations for action. Although the work of this committee was

conducted in another country and therefore may have limited relevance to Canada, its findings, which were very concrete and refer to many sectors of government and civil society, may serve as a springboard for our consultation. The recommendations, extracted from the full report of the Committee, have been revised to refer to Canadian processes and institutions.

Finally, we may wish to consider draft recommendations brought forward at the DFAIT/NGO consultations March 5th 1999. Copies of both documents are available.

It has been an honour and a pleasure to participate as a member of this panel. Thank you for your interest and attention. I look forward to a full and fruitful consultation this afternoon.

Religious Persecution in Sudan

by Mel Middleton

1.0 INTRODUCTION

It has been said that more Christians have been martyred in this century alone, than in the previous nineteen centuries combined. Seldom is this attack against Christianity as salient as in the country of Sudan. Yet it is not only the Christians who are suffering. The net has widened to include all who oppose the extremist religious ideology of the ruling National Islamic Front - including moderate, and tolerant Moslems. Indeed most Muslims in Sudan find the activities of the NIF government abhorrent, and contrary to the true teachings of Islam.

The track record of the current government in Sudan provides compelling evidence of a systematic, determined campaign of religious persecution against opponents of Islamic extremism. This is a campaign of gross human rights violations which is widespread, and carried out at the orders of top government officials.

It is a campaign which fits the definition of GENOCIDE as set out in the 1948 Genocide Convention following World War 2. Just as Hitler had his "final solution", so do the Islamic extremists have their "final solution" to the "southern problem". (See resource materials listed at the end of this report)

2.0 THE CRISIS IN SUDAN

Sudan is a country of vast resources. It has long been seen by the Arab world as its future breadbasket. There are those who believe that Sudan, if properly developed, could feed all of Africa. Along with agricultural wealth, Sudan has vast oil reserves, chromium, uranium, gold, timber, and cattle. The problems in Sudan are NOT because the land cannot produce wealth.

Yet last year, an estimated 200,000 southern Sudanese - mostly southern Christians - died in a preventable and predictable man made famine. It was Stalin who said that "if one person dies, that is a tragedy; if a thousand people die, that is a statistic". Unfortunately, to the world community at large, those 200,000 people - all of whom had names, dreams, friends and families - are now little more than statistics.

Sudan is one of the most serious crisis in the world today. At present, there are over 4 million displaced people; a brutal civil war which targets a civilian population, and a famine which is affecting an estimated 2.6 million people. But it is primarily the "African Sudanese" in the south, (who differ significantly from the "Arab Sudanese" in the north by race, culture, skin colour and often religion), who are suffering the most.

Sudan is a country where human rights are violated regularly, political freedoms are virtually non existent, and power has been concentrated in the hands of an oligarchy of

religious extremists, bent on imposing their ideology on the rest of the country, and eventually on the rest of Africa. It is a country where slavery is flourishing, with a wink and nod from the central government; where, according to some human rights groups, the rape of women is used for political and social ends; where groups such as the Nuba, Ingessena, and various southern ethnic groups are facing daily threats to their lives.

The government of Sudan is a sponsor of terrorist groups such as the Lord's Resistance Army in northern Uganda, known for its barbaric cruelty to the children it captures and enslaves. It has also supported groups such as Hamas, Hezbollah, and the infamous Osama Bin Laden.

Sudan is a country where civil war has claimed almost 2 million lives over the past 15 years alone, and has reaped untold havoc on a helpless civilian population for almost 40 years. In recent years, this war has turned even more nasty, with Sudan government planes bombing civilian sites such as hospitals, churches, and the feeding centers of NGOs, and has destroyed village after village in slash and burn raids, displacing millions. It is clearly NOT a war between the Sudan government, and the Sudanese rebels. It is a war between the Sudan government, and the PEOPLE of Southern Sudan - most of whom are Christians.

Religion has become a weapon of the state. Intense religious persecution of all who oppose its narrow ideology is one of the outcomes. The primary target of this persecution is the Christian population in the south, and Nuba mountains.

3.0 BACKGROUND

Historically, there has always been conflict between the people of northern and southern Sudan. There are a lot of factors which have caused this, including centuries of slave trading, religion, and control of land and resources. The base of power has always rested in the cities of the north, such as Khartoum. The lands of the south have always been seen by these centers of power, as sources of wealth to be extracted for their own benefit.

The colonial rule of the Anglo-Egyptian Condominium did little to alter this imbalance of power. At the time of independence, the south was annexed to the north in what can only be called a sell out of the African Sudanese, by the former British colonial administrators. Whatever the motivation of the colonialists, the deal sanctified a de facto "right" for the government in the north to continue to marginalize and exploit the people and resources of the African Sudanese.

Since then, the pattern of exploitation and oppression has continued. During the Anyanya wars of the 1960's and early 70's, missionaries reported that African Sudanese were slaughtered by the hundreds. Pastors and Christian leaders were tied up in sacks and thrown alive to the crocodiles. Others were buried up to their necks in the ground, with honey poured over them so that ants and other insects could devour them. In 30 years, little has changed, other than the intensity of persecution has increased, and the sophistication of methods has been refined.

In 1972 a peace agreement was brokered by the Ethiopian emperor, Haile Selassie, which gave the southerners regional autonomy. But in 1983, the regime in Khartoum abrogated that treaty. President Gaafar Nimeiri, acting on pressure from the National Islamic Front, was quoted at the time saying that the Addis Ababa agreement "was not written in the Koran", and therefore was not binding. The world stood by and watched as the foundations for a just settlement between the north and south crumbled, and war once again ravaged the land.

In 1989, the National Islamic Front took power in a military coup. Soon after, it became apparent that the Islamists were going to embark upon a program of ethnic cleansing, and destruction which would ensure the survival of their religious hegemony, and enable them to make Sudan a model Islamic state.

At the Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) regional peace talks in 1994, the NIF government declared openly their stated aim of not only making Sudan a model Islamic state, but also being the vehicle to which their brand of Islam (which includes as one of its objectives, the destruction of the state of Israel) - was to be spread to the whole of Africa.

4.0 THE NATURE OF RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN SUDAN

Officially, there is religious freedom in Sudan. But even the laws as they stand on paper openly discriminate against non-Muslims.

Islam is clearly the religion of the state, and the government has stated that Islam must inspire the country's laws. By inference, non-Muslims then, are viewed as second class citizens. Practicing religions other than Islam, becomes a privilege which can be taken away - not a fundamental right.

Laws governing what Muslims and non-Muslims may do vary significantly. Non Muslims can convert to Islam, but it is a capital offense for a Muslim to convert to another religion. A Muslim man may marry a non-Muslim woman. But a non-Muslim man is forbidden to marry a Muslim woman.

Similarly, Muslims may adopt a child of any background. Whereas non-Muslims are forbidden to adopt a child whose parents were Muslims, or any child who was abandoned.

Yet even the provisions which do provide some protection for non-Muslims under Sharia Islamia are applied selectively, and often left up to local security officials for interpretation. The judicial system is not independent of the NIF rulers, and hence abuses, even within the framework of Sharia, are seldom addressed.

Christianity and other religions are allowed as long as they remain irrelevant to political and social life in Sudan. Christians are tolerated so long as they don't claim citizenship as Muslims do.

What is so remarkable about the genocide and religious persecution in Sudan is not so much its unique brutality, or its high casualty figures. Rather, it is the degree to which it is being carried out under the noses of - and at times the consent of - the international community. It is being done slowly and consistently. But it is being carried out with precision. Christianity and other non-Muslim religions have no place in the "ideal Islamic state", as defined by Muslim extremists.

Even in the capital of Khartoum, churches in the shanty areas have been bulldozed and Christians transported by force to the desert outside the town and dumped there with no basic provisions. Christians are constantly denied permission to erect schools and places of worship, while mosques and kalwas are subsidized by the state.

Yet the most serious aspect of the genocide and religious persecution comes in the form of "forced Islamization. This strategy of the Islamic extremists is as clever as it is insidious:

The strategic use of famine and civil conflict;

Deflecting attention away from government activities and hiding the truth from the international community through careful manipulation and control of information.

4.1. The strategic use of famine and civil conflict.

The creation of displacement and vulnerability among the non Islamic peoples through bombing of civilian targets, combing raids, the arming of local militias, and fueling inter-ethnic and factional fighting has become a major feature of the civil war. Once populations have fled their homes, they have no means of support and become dependent upon outside assistance.

When assistance from the international community is denied (as it is now in the Nuba Mountains and other parts of Southern Sudan), the people are forced to migrate to the government garrisons where they can receive assistance from the government (through the UN and international NGOs who often partner with Islamic groups allied to the government), upon acceptance of Islam.

Those who don't go to the government towns face starvation and death. Others are captured and sold into slavery, while women are routinely raped, and forced to marry soldiers and members of local militia groups.

The Sudan government has employed the term "jihad" (holy war), in the context of the civil war, in order to mobilize the northern Muslim population to take up arms against

their non-Muslim countrymen, using the promise of war booty (which includes slaves, concubines, cattle, and land) as incentives;

The first region to feel the effects of this campaign was the Nuba Mountains. This regime has denied humanitarian access to the Nuba Mountains ever since it came to power. The UN, ICRC, and other NGOs have never been able to provide assistance to the more than 300,000 people living in the opposition held areas of the Nuba Mountains. In 1992-93, the world stood by as tens of thousands of Nuba were deported from the mountains and resettled in other areas of northern Sudan. While these deportations have slowed down, the campaign is still continuing, and humanitarian access is still being denied. Many of these have been sold into slavery, others killed. The women are routinely, and systematically raped, or forced to marry northern soldiers. Human rights groups charge that the purpose of this is twofold: 1. To provide incentives to poorly paid soldiers and government militias; and 2. To destroy the ethnic and familial identities of the Nuba people.

In 1994, this campaign of terror spread into northern Bahr El Ghazal, especially around the Heglig and Bentiu oil fields. Local militias, known as Murahaleen, as well as splinter factions under warlords such as Kerubino Kwanyin Bol, and Paulino Matep, were heavily armed by Khartoum, and given the task of creating havoc in the area. These raiders were (and continue to be) very successful in causing widespread displacement and ethnic cleansing of any ethnic groups in the area considered to be a potential opposition to the government. Thousands of internally displaced people began fleeing the oil field sites, and areas within a 200 kilometer proximity radius, such as Gogrial, and Awiel counties.

Many of these arrived at the NGO sites in areas of Southern Sudan where the United Nations agencies were allowed to operate. For years the increasing numbers of these displaced people were creating a major challenge to relief groups in the area who appealed to international donors to increase levels of support.

In 1998, the militia raids and ethnic cleansing hit an all time high, and precipitated the famine last year, in which an estimated 200,000 people died. Thousands more are living in peril, and are still facing death.

4.2 The Tragedy of the International Community's Response

Yet it is the response of the international community which is the most baffling in this whole scenario.

4.2.1 Ignoring Reports of Famine

Since the time of independence, the assault from successive regimes in Khartoum against the people of the south has been well known to the international community. Since 1994, the internally displaced people from the oilfields, Nuba Mountains and other areas where the genocide was taking place, have been telling their stories to the UN, and NGOs working in Sudan. Yet no action has been taken on the part of the international

community. Reports of slavery and genocide have been around for years, yet it was only recently (last month) that a UN agency (UNICEF) finally acknowledged it publicly - and only then to slam the activities of Christian agencies who were redeeming slaves.

The former UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights, Gaspar Biro, reported extensively on the human rights abuses in the Sudan, but quit in frustration when after years of hard work, absolutely no action was taken to stop the carnage. When the famine hit its peak in the beginning of 1998, Operation Lifeline Sudan (OLS), the UN agency which had the mandate to co-ordinate relief activities in Sudan, had less than 40% of the funding needed to maintain even the most basic emergency programs.

CIDA's own response to the growing number of accounts of internally displaced people, famine, ethnic cleansing, slavery and genocide that was taking place was to suspend all funding to OLS for two years (from 1996 to 1997) for emergency programs in the famine area over administrative issues. It was not until images of starving children once again filled our TV screens that emergency assistance was finally resumed in 1998.

4.2.2 Allowing Canadian Commercial Enterprises to Assist the Khartoum Government

One of the most tragic responses of the international community has been the failure to curb the activities of foreign transnational corporations, especially Canadian oil companies, from aiding and abetting the Khartoum government.

For several years, the Calgary based oil company, Arakis Energy Corp, had been partnering with the Sudanese government, in a business consortium which also includes the governments of China and Malaysia. By Arakis own admission, they were providing, over 10,000 barrels of oil per day to the Sudan government refinery in El Obeid, a city in the middle of Sudan which has very few civilian vehicles. El Obeid is, however, a major air force base and center for military operations against the Sudanese people in southern Sudan and the Nuba mountains.

In August of 1998, Talisman Energy Inc., another Calgary based oil company, took over the shares of Arakis and pumped in some badly needed capital to the whole enterprise. At a meeting at the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in September, 1998, Jim Buckee, Talisman Energy's CEO acknowledged that approximately 250 million dollars from this initial oil investment would directly benefit the Sudan government.

These oil executives have become a major source of misinformation to the international community. In a form letter which was sent out to Canadians who had written in to Talisman Energy's head office in Calgary citing their concerns about human rights abuses in Sudan, Jim Buckee stated upon his return from Sudan: " ...certainly, I did not see anything that would lead me to believe that we are propping up a malign regime."

At a recent rally in Port Sudan, Sudanese Vice President, Ali Osman Mohamed Taha stated that "with the start of the oil exportation, (scheduled to begin the end of June,

1999), we will score a decisive victory by liberating all positions and spreading peace and stability in all parts of Sudan".

It is clear from these remarks that the Sudanese government is counting on the development of the oil industry to aid them in their war against the Sudanese people. This is clear evidence that Canadian oil companies, are directly aiding the Khartoum government in their war efforts. We can also infer, with reasonable probability, that Canadian oil companies are unwittingly supporting a campaign of genocide against the people of southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains.

4.2.3 Giving Tyrants the "Benefit of the Doubt"

There is no question that the government of Sudan is making a concerted effort to dupe the international community into believing that it is not engaged in brutal and inhumane activities, and is simply trying to work for peace. Churches are left open in Khartoum and a few other main cities. There are even Christians and other with government portfolios. If one does not speak Arabic, travels only to Khartoum and other areas where the government allows, and speaks only with government officials and their supporters within the UN community, one could come away with an entirely different understanding of the suffering of the Sudanese people, and the reality of religious persecution and genocide.

Many have been fooled.

Yet this is not unusual. One only has to remember the disbelief of the international community to reports coming out of Germany during World War 2, to know how easy it is for dictators to dupe the world community. Similarly, during the days of Stalin, highly respected people such as Bernard Shaw, Beatrice and Sidney Webb, and even PM Herriot of France, visited the Ukraine during the early 1930's and proclaimed that reports of the famine and mass killings of Stalin's campaign against the Kulaks to be false. Later, by Stalin's own admission, over 10 million Kulaks had been "liquidated".

The same thing appears to be happening in the Sudan today. Despite all the evidence from numerous human rights groups, independent journalists and NGOs, the international community is still reluctant to take any action against the despots in Khartoum. Time after time, the world has given the ruling junta the "benefit of the doubt".

When Khartoum finally opened up some areas of Bahr El Ghazal to emergency relief flights last year, they received accolades of praise from the international community, rather than criticism for closing those areas off in the first place.

Despite compelling evidence of Sudan government involvement in the slave trade, international diplomats consistently refer to the "alleged slave trade", and never make a direct link between it and the regime in Khartoum - this in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary - evidence which anyone can gather for themselves by interviewing the redeemed slaves.

The Nuba Mountains have been sealed off from outside observers for over 10 years. Yet there has never been any serious attempt to force Khartoum to open up this area for humanitarian assistance and investigation into the reports of genocide.

Whenever the Sudan government announces that they are serious about achieving peace in Sudan, the international community announces "new breakthroughs" in peace negotiations. Cease-fires come and go, but there has never been a stop to the bombing of innocent civilian targets in the Nuba Mountains. Such agreements only allow the Sudan government to redeploy their forces in strategic areas not covered by the cease-fires.

Consequently, year after year, the population of the Southern Sudanese Christians continues to be decimated, and more and more land is taken over by the northerners.

4.2.4 Manipulation of humanitarian aid agencies

The way that the Khartoum government has used the international aid community to further its campaign of genocide is indeed striking.

During the civil war in Ethiopia, the Communist regime of Mengistu Haile Mariam attempted to use famine to starve out the support base for the TPLF and EPLF rebels in northern Ethiopia. When the world community finally figured out what was happening, they were forced to support a cross-border humanitarian operation directly into the rebel held areas, by-passing the Ethiopian authorities, and hence defying the sovereignty of Ethiopia.

These efforts saved the lives of thousands of innocent Ethiopian civilians who otherwise would have starved to death. Yet the humanitarian assistance also increased the popularity of the rebel movements, and was a significant factor in their ultimate victory over the Mengistu regime.

The National Islamic Front in Sudan learned from this experience, and no doubt, was determined not to let it happen in Sudan. Consequently, Operation Lifeline Sudan was allowed to exist in some areas under the control of opposition forces. The UN, however, is unable to operate outside of its mandate, which requires it to abide by the edicts of the "sovereign" state. Hence, the Khartoum government has total control over the activities, location of operations, and programs of OLS, and its partner agencies.

This has enabled them to focus on strategic areas such as the Nuba Mountains. Northern Bahr El Ghazal, and the oil field areas, while still appearing to the international community to be concerned about the people in southern Sudan.

The UN, and other NGOs working in the areas to which they have been granted access by Khartoum, are reluctant to speak out against government atrocities, for fear that it will jeopardize their ability to meet the needs of the people in the areas where they are working. Consequently, most aid workers are compelled to sign "gag clauses", which

prevent them from exposing human rights abuses. Khartoum is thus able to lean on the aid community, and silence open opposition.

5.0 A CALL FOR ACTION

For decades, the campaign against Christians in Sudan has continued unchecked by the world. More recently, this campaign has spread to anyone with different religious beliefs from the state, including moderate Muslims.

Almost 2 million people have died - the vast majority of them southern Christians. Millions more are displaced, either internally, or in refugee camps outside the country.

The genocide continues.

Up until recently, the conventional wisdom has been that no side could win the civil war. Now, thanks in part to Canadian Oil Companies, this no longer likely to be true. With the oil flowing, the NIF could very well, achieve its objectives. Once the oil pipeline starts flowing, (around June 1999) an estimated 150,000 barrels a day will provide sufficient resources for the Khartoum junta to wage its war against its own people successfully

It is said that Confucius was once asked how to solve all the problems in the world. His reply: " to insist on the exact definition of words".

We have all seen what happens when the world community refuses to call genocide by its name. The 800,000 Rwandans who were hacked to death by drunk, machete wielding Interahamwe militia remain a tragic reminder of the price for international indolence.

Why was no country prepared to "insist on the exact definition of words", and use the "G" word in Rwanda, when it was obvious to the world what was happening? There is a growing awareness now that the Rwandan tragedy could have been prevented, or drastically curtailed, if some country had had the courage to use the word "genocide" in time. Imagine the number of lives that could have been saved, let alone the unbelievable expense of dealing with the humanitarian aftermath.

Yet in Sudan, the tragedy in terms of sheer numbers, is even greater than Rwanda. While the people are not being hacked to death in front of CNN they are, nevertheless, dying in larger numbers. It is clearly a GENOCIDE by attrition, with famine and civil conflict as its primary tools.

The 1948 United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide outlines the obligations of the International Community when a member state commits genocide. But the experiences of Rwanda and Sudan begs the questions:

"Does this Convention only apply to European countries?

Do black Africans have as much right to the Convention's protection as people in Bosnia and Kosovo?

Canada and the Canadian people need to address this issue immediately. Genocide is genocide, and must be stated so when appropriate. We believe that in the case of Sudan, it is appropriate. Enough credible agencies have called our attention to it. The issue must be addressed. If there is any doubt - then by all means, establish an independent, competent commission to investigate all the evidence. But time is running out.
Martin Luther once said: "The greatest sin of our time is not the few who have destroyed, but the vast majority who have sat idly by."

LIST OF RESOURCE MATERIAL

"A Strategic Famine in a War Ravaged State", by Hilary MacKenzie, Los Angeles Times, Jan 3, 1999

Arakis Energy Corp Prospectus, 1997

"Cries from the Heart: Who Will Stop the Genocide in Sudan", Inter-Church Coalition on Africa, Canada, February 1999)

"Food and Power in Sudan: A Critique of Humanitarianism," African Rights, 1997

"Facing Genocide", African Rights, 1995;

"Letter from Jim Buckee to Morris Kuol", Talisman Energy Inc. CEO, Nov 12, 1998

"Human Rights and the Churches: New Challenges, Reports and Papers of the Global Review of Ecumenical Policies and Practices on Human Rights, World Council of Churches, Morges, Switzerland 23-27 June 1998

"Quantifying Genocide in Southern Sudan and the Nuba Mountains", U.S. Committee for Refugees, December 1998;

"Sudan: International Responses to War in the Nuba Mountains", Mark Bradbury, published in Review of African Political Economy, No. 77, 1998.

"United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide", 1948

United Nations Commissioner for Human Rights (Five reports by Gaspar Biro - Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Sudan. 1994 - 1998

Ronald Schwartz
On behalf of
Canada Tibet Committee

In this presentation today I will provide a brief account of current conditions of religious persecution in Tibet. It is impossible, however, to understand religious persecution in Tibet without understanding the political context in which it occurs and the political apparatus that the Chinese government uses to maintain control in Tibet. Religious persecution in Tibet is not just a matter of ethnic or religious conflict or discrimination by a majority against its minorities. Religious persecution in Tibet is politically motivated, and consciously implemented as policy to realize political ends.

Some of you are probably familiar with at least the broad outlines of what happened in Tibet during first two decades after the Chinese communist government and the People's Liberation Army moved into Tibet in 1950 and 1951. In the eastern Tibetan areas -- what Tibetans refer to as Kham and Amdo, which are now incorporated into a number of Chinese provinces -- resistance was brutally suppressed, with large-scale loss of life, and monasteries and nunneries were destroyed. The immediate objective was the implementation of the socialist reforms underway in China. Tibetans in these areas were not exempted from the political campaigns raging throughout China during the 1950s, which included attacks on religion and the destruction of monasteries. Following the 1959 uprising in Lhasa, when the Dalai Lama and some 100,000 Tibetans fled to India, the same policies were implemented in central Tibet. Within a few years, virtually all of Tibet's more than 6,000 monasteries and nunneries were destroyed. Virtually all of the more than 500,000 monks and nuns were driven from the monasteries and nunneries of Tibet; many were tortured, killed, imprisoned, or forced to disrobe. A few years later, during the Cultural Revolution, any display of religion was prohibited, punishable by beatings and imprisonment, and all religious objects were confiscated and destroyed.

I do not want to dwell on this history, but there are certain continuities with the present policy on religion. Though all of this destruction was conceived at the time as part of a socialist agenda to reconstruct Tibet, its aim was to obliterate the distinctive characteristics of Tibetan culture and civilization and absorb Tibet into China. Though Chinese society has itself undergone many changes since the end of the Cultural Revolution, the religion of Tibetans was then, as it is now, still seen as an obstacle to the goal of absorbing Tibet into China.

Religious practice did not reappear again until after 1980. As restrictions were lifted during the 1980's there was a huge resurgence of religion in Tibet. Once it was clear they would not be punished, Tibetans set up altars in their homes, prayed in public, and made pilgrimages to holy places. There was, at the same time, an enormous amount of spontaneous rebuilding of temples and monasteries – almost entirely supported by people's voluntary labour and resources. Most importantly, monasteries and nunneries filled with young monks and nuns who wished to pursue a religious vocation.

Official documents from this period indicate that the attitude of the government toward religion had not changed. During this period of relative accommodation the Chinese government hoped to win the support of Tibetans while it pursued the new economic reforms. It certainly did not anticipate the enthusiasm for religion shown by a younger generation of Tibetans who had grown up under Chinese rule.

It was also during this period that the young monks and nuns began to organize demonstrations in support of the Dalai Lama and Tibetan independence, and to call for human rights and democracy. Monks and nuns were prepared to face beatings, arrest, imprisonment, and death for the peaceful expression of their beliefs. Though some of these demonstrations by monks and nuns were large and resulted in troops opening fire on demonstrators and bystanders, many have been small – no more than a few monks or nuns, prepared to face immediate arrest and imprisonment.

Since 1987 several thousand Tibetans have been arrested and imprisoned, with perhaps as many as a thousand now remaining in prison. Two thirds of those detained have been monks and nuns – most under thirty years of age and some just in their teens. Some have received sentences as long as twenty years for offenses of shouting slogans, putting up posters, or distributing literature. Religious practice is forbidden in prison. Defiance of restrictions inside the prisons results in beatings and torture, and lengthening of sentences. In a number of cases deaths have resulted from treatment received in prison.

A renewed repressive policy toward religion was given official approval at the Third National Forum on Work in Tibet, which took place in July of 1994 in Beijing. This called for a new assault on Tibetan religion and culture. In particular, the Dalai Lama is now vilified as a religious leader and denunciation of the Dalai Lama has been required as a test of loyalty. As the Chinese government has come to recognize the depth of Tibetan discontent, and how widespread nationalist feelings are, they have become obsessed with loyalty. Propaganda has become more and more strident, and suspicion has extended to include more and more of the Tibetan population – not just monks and nuns. This has led to a climate of fear and coercion not seen since the days of the Cultural Revolution.

Some of the key documents of the Third Forum, as well as material documenting the subsequent implementation of that policy, have become available over the intervening years. There is an enormous amount of information on Chinese religious policy and its implementation available from government sources such as local newspapers and internal documents that have become available –as well as from reports of refugees. The policy of Western governments should reflect this information rather than relying on public reassurances from the Chinese government, guided tours offered to visiting dignitaries, and statements intended for foreign consumption.

A ban on the display of pictures of the Dalai Lama in public places was instituted in 1994. This was extended to include the display of all religious symbols in the homes of not just Party members, but all government workers and their families, who were required to allow

their homes to be searched for altars, religious pictures, and other religious paraphernalia. A ban on the display of Dalai Lama pictures in temples and monasteries was instituted in 1996. Monasteries have been invaded by security forces and searches made of monks and nuns' quarters. In May 1996, when a team went to Ganden monastery near Lhasa to enforce a ban on Dalai Lama pictures, six monks were shot and wounded and one died. Three months later some 92 monks were expelled from the monastery for refusing to sign an affidavit denouncing the Dalai Lama. More and more expulsions have followed at Ganden, which now has just a handful of monks.

A campaign for political reeducation – the so-called Patriotic Education Campaign -- was instituted in the monasteries in 1996 to implement the goals of the Third Work Forum. Political Work teams were sent into monasteries and nunneries throughout Tibet, even in remote rural and nomad areas, including areas outside the Tibet Autonomous Region. This included many monasteries and nunneries in which the monks and nuns had never been involved in demonstrations or protest. These work teams frequently are accompanied by armed police, who stand guard over the monks and nuns as the work teams speak.

Political work teams remain for as long as three months. The reeducation combines the investigation and interrogation of individual monks and nuns with lectures by political workers. Monks and nuns are given the correct answers to a series of questions on Tibetan politics, history, and religion, and then required to take written examinations and sign a written affidavit of loyalty. To pass and be allowed to remain monks and nuns must agree that Tibet has always been a part of China. They must assent to characterizations of the Dalai Lama as a criminal, unfit to be a religious leader, and not worthy of veneration. Refusing to participate in the reeducation is not allowed. Monks and nuns who attempt to boycott the sessions are arrested and imprisoned. Failure to comply with the demands of the work team and to denounce the Dalai Lama results in expulsion or arrest. It is significant that the Dalai Lama has recently felt compelled to declare that monks and nuns should denounce him under these conditions, rather than face torture, arrest, and imprisonment.

I can cite case after case of the closing down of monasteries, or their reduction to a skeleton staff following the arrival of the work teams. Sometimes the monks themselves shut down the monasteries and walk out – or just leave when they hear a political work team is due.
A large number of these monks and nuns, after leaving or being expelled, or after serving several years in prison, head over the mountains through Nepal and become new refugees in India. Perhaps as many as 10,000 monks and nuns have made this journey in the past ten years. Many have been caught and imprisoned along the way, some have been shot by border guards. Others have died from exposure to the harsh weather in the mountains in their attempt to reach freedom.

The ordinary practice of religion by lay people has also become more and more difficult in Tibet. In January of 1998, a new three-year campaign was launched to promote atheism.

This campaign is directed at ordinary Tibetans from all walks of life, not just government officials. Its aim, according to the announcements that have accompanied the campaign, is to diminish the respect of farmers and herdsmen for religious leaders and to discourage reliance on religion.

Perhaps the best single illustration of both the aims and consequences of Chinese religious policy in Tibet is the controversy surrounding the selection of the Panchen Lama. This too has resulted in the further expulsion of monks and nuns, arrests and imprisonment, the closing of monasteries and nunneries, and the flight of monks and nuns into exile – including senior religious figures who have attempted for years to work with the Chinese government. It also has led to the imprisonment of a six year-old boy -- Gendun Choekyi Nyima -- and his entire family. They have been held now for almost four years. They are guilty of no crime whatsoever. They have been allowed no visitors and their fate is unknown.

Here is some background to the controversy. In May, 1995, the Dalai Lama in exile confirmed the selection of a boy from a nomad family living inside Tibet as the reincarnation of the 10th Panchen Lama who had died in 1989. The name of this boy had been submitted to the Dalai Lama by a search committee formed by the Panchen Lama's monastery, Tashilhunpo, near Shigatse. It is long-standing Tibetan religious tradition that the selection of a Panchen Lama must be confirmed by the Dalai Lama. This search committee had cooperated from the outset with the Chinese government, and operated under their auspices.

Examining the chronology of events going back to the hard-line policy on religion enunciated by the Third Work Forum, it is clear that the issue was not just that the Dalai Lama had announced his confirmation of the original choice independently of the Chinese government. The Dalai Lama clearly felt that he had no choice but to go ahead with the confirmation regardless of the Chinese government's wishes. The Chinese government had made its intention clear to Chadrel Rinpoche, the head of the search committee and abbot of Tashilhunpo monastery, that the final selection would be made by lottery from a list of names of several candidates. To do so would thus exclude the Dalai Lama from any religious role in the selection and establish the Chinese government as the final arbiter of religious tradition.

This lottery procedure proposed by the Chinese government has no legitimacy among Tibetans, nor was it used in the selection of the last Panchen Lama. The Chinese government was attempting to resurrect an antique procedure invented by a Manchu Emperor in the late 18th century as a way of validating its authority over Tibetan religion. Thus, we have here the bizarre spectacle of an officially atheist government determining the procedure for the selection of a religious leader.

Chadrel Rinpoche was immediately arrested. He was sentenced last May to 6 years in prison, along with his assistant. A work team was sent to Tashilhunpo monastery. From that monastery alone some 32 monks were arrested for refusing to denounce Chadrel

Rinpoche and accept the government imposed lottery. In November, 1995, a lottery was organized by the Chinese government and a boy selected. Religious leaders in Tibet, as well as ordinary monks and nuns, have been obligated to accept the choice or risk punishment. Virtually no Tibetans recognize the boy selected by the Chinese government lottery as the Panchen Lama.

Accepting the boy selected by the lottery and denouncing the boy confirmed by the Dalai Lama have become an additional test of loyalty to the Chinese government in the reeducation campaign going on throughout Tibet. Failure to comply has had drastic consequences. To cite just two examples. In July, 1997, at Jonang monastery in Shigatse prefecture, the 70 year-old abbot was imprisoned for several months and religious statues looted by government officials after the monks refused to comply with the conditions of the work team. In November 1997, 100 armed soldiers were called in to force the nuns of Rakhor monastery near Lhasa to submit to patriotic education. The nuns were sent home after refusing to comply and the nunnery has now reportedly been destroyed except for the main assembly hall. These are monasteries and nunneries that have not been involved in protest before. The arrival of the work team and armed troops and the forced reeducation provoke resistance – which in turn leads to a confrontation.

In two other recent cases from the spring of 1998 practitioners in retreat in mountain hermitages have been evicted and their dwellings destroyed on the grounds that the residents – mostly Buddhist nuns – had not received the requisite registration and permits from the authorities. These two hermitages – Drag Yerpa near Lhasa and Chimpu near Samye -- have been in regular use by meditators for 1,200 years and were rebuilt and occupied over the last 15 years.

A number of deaths have been reported while in custody following arrests. We continue to receive reports of monks and nuns dying in prison from beatings and torture – or sometimes shortly after their release from injuries received while in custody.

One of the most disturbing incidents occurred last spring in Drapchi prison, in the northern suburb of Lhasa, where many monks and nuns are serving sentences. At least 10 monks and nuns died as a result of attempting to stage demonstrations inside the prison on the 1st and 4th of May, 1998. The prisoners hoped to attract the attention of an official European Union delegation to Tibet making a visit to the prison. Several of the monks and nuns were shot and the remainder died from beatings. The delegation were unaware of the demonstration at the time and details of the incident did come out until several days after the visit. To her credit, Mary Robinson, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights refused a visit to Drapchi prison during her visit to Tibet. Nevertheless, two Drepung monks were detained in September, 1998, for preparing a letter to present to her.

These are just a few cases selected to illustrate the dimensions of religious persecution in Tibet. These are not isolated or local events – they are the result of the implementation of a religious policy formulated at the highest levels of the Chinese government. As this policy has become harsher and harsher in its conception and implementation, the situation

for Tibetans has become worse and worse. There will be no end to religious persecution in Tibet until Tibetans are allowed not just to practice their religion freely, but to think and express themselves freely. The two really cannot be separated.

99/22 CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

NOTES FOR AN ADDRESS BY THE HONOURABLE LLOYD AXWORTHY MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO THE CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS ROUNDTABLE ON RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

OTTAWA, Ontario
March 17, 1999 ***(12:45 p.m. EST)***

As many of you are aware, Canada has been reshaping its foreign policy to reflect the increasing human dimension of global peace and security. Many of the challenges we face as a global community, from violent conflict to newer threats — illicit drugs, terrorism or environmental degradation — have a more direct impact on the daily lives of ordinary people. Human security is providing both the focus and the impetus for global action. As a result, Canada has been taking a more human-centred approach to global relations in the initiatives we take, the themes we pursue and the methods we use.

Human rights are the cornerstone of human security. Promoting full respect for human rights and dignity is fundamental to a foreign policy that aims to focus on the welfare of people as well as states.

Freedom of religion is a basic human right. It has a central place in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It is an enduring concern of global human rights organizations — governmental and non-governmental. It figures prominently in national human rights laws and provisions around the world. However defined, it is recognized as a fundamental human value requiring close attention.

For good reason. An individual's faith goes to the core of that person's beliefs and identity. A society's respect for religious expression is a measure of its commitment to tolerance and a yardstick of its capacity to accommodate difference. Religious intolerance, on the other hand, has been and is a source of conflict, violence and human suffering.

As a result, protecting and advancing freedom of religion is an intrinsic part of Canada's human security agenda. And in our changing global context, this is more rather than less urgent. The demise of Cold War constraints and the emergence of globalization has had its positive sides. But the new global reality also has a darker side, creating new stresses — political, economic and social.

Some individuals and groups have responded by retreating to more traditional, sometimes extreme, values to assert their identities. In some cases, leaders have preyed on the fears of an uncertain time, inciting or sanctioning hatred to promote their own ambitions. In other situations, a more transparent global environment has served to highlight or sharpen long-standing prejudice and oppression.

In these circumstances, freedom of religion is particularly vulnerable. Abuses of religious beliefs occur in a variety of ways, from random acts of violence, to quasi-official persecution, to entrenched, state-sanctioned prejudice.

The result is a global situation in which religious tension, persecution and oppression are a continuing if not growing concern, manifesting themselves in different forms including in Afghanistan, Belarus, China, Cuba, India, Indonesia, Pakistan, Russia and Vietnam. The specific

situations you will consider today — Sudan, Iran and Tibet — are also troubling, each for unique reasons.

However, challenges to freedom of religion wherever they happen cannot go unanswered. Canadians need to be involved in responding — as a way to project our values and advance our interests.

Efforts to promote religious tolerance abroad reflect our experience at home. The same capacity for tolerance, accommodation, negotiation and goodwill that we have used to build a united, multicultural — and multifaith — country can and should be applied internationally. While we seek to project these values elsewhere, we must remain vigilant about the impact of religious extremism in our own midst and constantly work toward greater religious understanding at home.

Advancing religious freedom also serves our national interests. Religious intolerance can and has led to uncertainty and violent conflict. As a result, it can affect our prosperity, which depends on global and regional stability. It can cost us directly through the funds Canadians devote to humanitarian and other aid to victims of conflict in which religious persecution plays a part or is used as an instrument of war — in Sudan, for example, the conflict has cost Canada $1 million a month. It can increase the risks to our own security if it involves terrorism or if it spills over onto our own shores.

Canada therefore needs to be engaged — and we have been, in multilateral and bilateral forums. At the United Nations, we have strongly backed the activities of the UN Special Rapporteur on the Question of Religious Intolerance. Canada was a key proponent of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief. We have worked vigorously to promote the implementation of its objectives. Canada has been an active co-sponsor of resolutions opposing religious intolerance at both the UN General Assembly and the Commission on Human Rights.

We have also been working bilaterally and with civil society to use religious dialogue as a tool for reconciliation. As a follow-up to the Oslo Interfaith Declaration, Canada and Norway are exploring an initiative involving the Canadian Council of Churches and their Norwegian counterparts aimed at building a broad-based international civil society coalition to advance freedom of religion.

Freedom of religion is also part of the agenda in our bilateral human rights dialogues with China and Cuba. We are working hard to foster dialogue between Chinese and Canadian civil society groups in this area. In Cuba, the recent progress made by the Catholic Church results in no small part from the emphasis Canada and other countries have put on this issue. As part of our efforts to expand contacts with Iran, Canadian parliamentarians raised the issue of religious freedom during a visit there last month.

In many ways our approach is still a work in progress. As we look to the future and to developing our ideas and activities further, we will focus our efforts in the following areas:

1. **Reinforcing existing mechanisms.** To a certain extent, we already have many of the instruments we require to move forward. What we now need is to make them work better. Multilaterally, Canada will carry on efforts at the UN while expanding our efforts, where appropriate, in other organizations in which we participate. The OSCE [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe] is promising in that regard. We will support further reflection and initiate concrete actions to engage a multifaith dialogue in the OSCE region. To that end, the OSCE Advisory Panel of Experts on Freedom of Religion has an

important role to play. Canada will participate at an OSCE seminar on the subject in Vienna on March 22 to consider next steps.

We will also continue to pursue our bilateral efforts. To that end, I am pleased to note that China has indicated its willingness to host a visit by a Canadian delegation to engage in a dialogue on issues of religious freedom. Member churches of the Canadian Council of Churches, in conjunction with their Chinese partners, are discussing options for such a continued dialogue.

2. **Using information technology.** From Bosnia to Burma, the information superhighway is making it possible to advance human rights objectives.

   Last fall, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade [DFAIT] organized an NGO [non-governmental organization] forum on the Internet and human rights. We are turning our attention now to how information technology, as well as improved networking, better reporting and enhanced information gathering, can all be developed and used more specifically as instruments to promote religious freedom. I am pleased to announce today that DFAIT is prepared to devote resources for this purpose. I would welcome your ideas about how we can work in partnership to that end.

3. **Involving and mobilizing Canadians.** The engagement of Canadians and Canadian civil society is essential in promoting religious tolerance around the world.

   The advice and views from individuals and groups such as yourselves will be important in determining the government's priorities. To that end, many of you participated in a roundtable discussion on freedom of religion and religious intolerance organized two weeks ago by DFAIT. You are meeting today under the auspices of the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development for further reflection. The recommendations made two weeks ago and your discussions today will be helpful in moving forward.

Religious beliefs are ultimately an intensely personal matter. Consequently, while governments have a role in promoting religious freedom abroad, this responsibility must be shared by individuals, NGOs and religious groups. Working through and mobilizing interest in our own parishes, temples and mosques, I am convinced that we can all make a contribution to advancing religious freedom beyond our borders. I would be interested to hear from you how we might work together in pursuing this objective.

The promotion of religious freedom is integral to full respect for human rights. Human rights are in turn the foundation for human security. Consequently, in pursuing our human security agenda, we must be engaged in fighting religious intolerance. I have outlined some of the ways we are doing this and the direction we intend to take. I look forward to hearing the conclusions of your discussions.

Thank you.

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ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Summary of the Roundtable Discussion

***Sam Fanous (Canadian Coptic Association):**

- The situation of the Copts in Egypt is similar to the First Nations in Canada.
- There are problems with both the government and Muslim fundamentalists (MFs). In terms of Muslim fundamentalists, they aspire to topple the government. However, the Muslim government is inherently anti-Coptic and are suppressing the Copts.
- The government is not actively against the MFs; they are well entrenched in the country. The government only acts against them if there is an attack of senior government officials and/or the government infrastructure or if western tourists are attacked.
- There is tremendous employment inequity. For the most part no Christian mayors, Christian governors etc. As a token gesture, there are only six Christian ministers appointed by the Egyptian president.
- With respect to education, all schools teach history and omit seven centuries of Coptic history. Children grow up with the idea that Christians are aliens, which only further exacerbates hatred within the country. Although the number of Coptics has decreased, there are still ten million today that need to be supported.
- Canada has a unique position in that the world looks to Canada for leadership on human rights matters. Two recommendations: calls for aid to be tied with guarantees for human rights; and for Canada to acknowledge that Coptics are under persecution everywhere in Egypt.

***Shadab Khokhar (International Christian AWAZ):**

- State laws have created an atmosphere of fear among Christians. Persecution and terrorism is state-sponsored.
- For five years our organization has met with different government officials to try to act against such persecution. Christians in Pakistan need help and we need to formally come together to help them.

Mubarak Nazir (Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam):

- Ahmadiyya Muslims are a community that was founded on justice and peace and are hated because of our non-violent past.
- Mosques built by Ahmadiyya Muslims in Pakistan have been destroyed. People who commit these acts have misrepresented Islam: Islam preaches tolerance.

- Not calling for cuts to Pakistan aid, but for pressure to be exerted for religious freedom.

Maire O'Brien (Canada Asia Working Group):
Speaking about China:

- Churches were being desecrated and though there has been significant progress made with respect to freedom and tolerance, there are continuing elements of fear and intolerance.

- Although all religious groups have religious freedoms unprecedented in relation to the past, more open attitudes on the part of central, as well as local, authorities are still needed.

- The laws in place to protect religious practices are ostensibly to protect the state's control of religious activity, but they also ensure uniform application of controls, i.e. protect against arbitrary implementation by local cadres.

- Welcomes Canada's co-sponsorship of a resolution on freedom of religion at the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva.

- Impassioned pleas made at the Roundtable need to be grounded on some sort of methodology that will help those assembled to develop realistic frameworks for domestic and international policy development and implementation.

***Bonnie Greene (United Church of Canada):**

- Need for DFAIT to create a Canadian table on this issue.

- This group should be multidisciplinary (NGOs, governments, academics etc.) and this would be a key follow up to today's discussions. It would act in an advisory capacity on religious intolerance.

- Need to get religious communities together so that we can talk about these issues.

Funda Dominic (African South Sudanese Canadian Association):

- Wants to believe what Minister Axworthy said but is worried about the fact that the Minister has no mandate to impose sanctions on Sudan.

- Discouraged by activity of Canadian oil companies in Sudan. Need action against these oil companies in order to get them to increase and improve heath and education in the region.

- Before anything could be done about slavery there needs to be a cease-fire.

Bob Mills (Member of Parliament, Foreign Affairs Critic, Reform Party of Canada):

- Canada's role as a diplomatic mediator has been distorted given the fact that he was advised by DFAIT not to go to either India or Pakistan.

- Canada's unique role is one of action, involvement and leadership.

***Nabil Malek (Canadian Egyptian Organization of Human Rights):**

- Religious freedom is at the core of democracies, without religious tolerance we cannot build democracies.

- Need to spread the culture of democracy to the Third World.

***Kathryn Graham (MakePeace International):**

- Should use the arts to raise awareness of religious persecution and to encourage action on behalf of its victims.

- Use creative resources to engage the media and politicians in the struggle to expose and eliminate religious persecution.

***Cheryl Hotchkiss (Amnesty International):**

- Need to also look at the persecution of women given the fact that such activities are part of an overall culture of religious intolerance.

***Thubten Samdup (Canada Tibet Committee):**

- In the case of Tibet it almost seems like a losing battle. We are fighting for the very existence of our people and culture.

- Can't help but be very cynical when we go through such an exercise as today and yet there is still not the political will to initiate real change. If human and religious rights are important then our leadership should have the guts to stand up.

- Calls for the immediate release of the Panchen Lama.

Harry Qualman (UN Association in Canada):

- Groups present are all individually powerful but should recognize that there is greater strength in numbers when it comes to influencing the government. Today represents an opportunity for different groups to cooperate.

- All religious groups can provide examples of persecution.

- Need to unify our foreign policy with our development policy.

***Bruce Clemenger (Evangelical Fellowship of Canada):**

- Would be willing to help establish and participate in a committee similar to today's in order to foster interaction among participating groups, help mobilize our own members, facilitate dialogue with the federal government and increase awareness across Canada.

David Morrison (University of Prince Edward Island):

- We should teach human rights in our own seminaries and places of learning.

***Laurie Wiseberg (Human Rights Internet):**

- Next year there will be a world conference on racism and we should use that as a forum in which to discuss religious intolerance.

- Violations are committed in the name of religions.

- HRI is hoping to develop a website on religious intolerance and religious persecution.

- Need to be careful not to blindly emulate the US; sanctions is not the right choice in all cases. Sanctions should be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Kathy Vandergrift (World Vision Canada):

- Faith-based development NGO's understand the significance of religion in other cultures and its importance in the development process

- In practice, staff who work in situations where there is religious persecution, often engage in quiet advocacy because sometimes more can be done quietly than by public embarrassment. They must also be careful or they may be thrown out and then they can not do anything for people who are persecuted.

- Development workers who are sensitive to religious issues often have information that could be useful to human rights organizations. We need to improve the

mechanisms for channelling information relating to religious persecution with assurance that information will be used carefully and protect people who share it.

- This group may wish to review a CIDA policy paper on "Religion and Development."

***Johanna Myyra (Human Rights Internet):**

- Need to educate the public, media, etc., about international human rights standards that already exist.

- Proposes making a handbook on this in a format that is tailored for people working in this area.

****Mel Middleton (Freedom Quest International):**

- Refer to his resolution on Sudan. (See appendix)

Rabbi Reuven Bulka (Canadian Jewish Congress):

- Submitting the proceedings of today's gathering in the report should be effective. The government seems to want an impetus from us to get them to do more than what they are presently doing.

- When one of us is in trouble, we are all in trouble so we need to continue to work together.

****Susanne Tamas (Baha'i Community of Canada):**

- Important that we have government/academics/faith/NGOs involved in the consultation so we can develop effective policy recommendations.

- Refer to her nine strategies for consideration. (See appendix)

* These organizations have also submitted recommendations included in the appendix.

** These individuals have submitted recommendations or strategies for consideration on their own and not on behalf of any organization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Consensus Development

This roundtable was assembled for two principle purposes: 1) to provide a forum for different groups to report and share information and 2) to make recommendations to the Minister of Foreign Affairs through the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development.

The meeting was not designed to act as a voting assembly to pass or defeat specific policy resolutions. The recommendations were to be developed from the day's discussion and designed to reflect a consensus of the participants. As we had participation from a wide variety of groups representing a broad range of views, this represented a challenge.

Although there was widespread agreement on most of the issues discussed, some participants nevertheless were bound by various constraints. For example, in several cases the individual present representing an organization was not in a position to endorse a resolution on behalf of that organization.

However, the following recommendations were ideas that emanated from the roundtable and were agreed on by all who were in attendance for the session on policy recommendations. Although it is safe to say that there was unanimity in the room, this does not imply that every organization or individual on the List of Participants officially endorses all of the recommendations as worded below. (For specific endorsements, see appendix).

Recommendations

The Canadian government should:

- **Support increased funding for the UN Commission on Human Rights and for the Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance.**
- **Link foreign aid with human rights and freedom of religion guarantees.**
- **Establish a parliamentary sub-committee to examine the issue of religious intolerance.**
- **Provide support for the creation of a web-site on religious freedom for the purposes of advocacy and research.**
- **Provide regular and up-to-date information to the Immigration and Refugee Board on what countries practise religious persecution and the nature of that persecution.**
- **Use all diplomatic means, including at the UN Security Council, to alleviate the suffering of Sudanese Christians and press for a resolution to the conflict.**
- **Apply pressure for the release of the Panchen Lama.**
- **Establish a broad-based advisory committee consisting of representatives from faith groups and NGOs to study the issue of religious intolerance and report regularly to the Minister. (The idea was expressed that the members of the roundtable, with possible additions could fulfil that role)**

The roundtable also strongly endorses Canada's co-sponsorship of a resolution on freedom of religion at the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva.

APPENDIX I

The following recommendations were submitted by several participants as individuals and on behalf of their organizations. They represent only the views of those organizations and individuals and not necessarily of Canadian Jewish Congress or any other participant unless so indicated.

Bonnie Greene, United Church of Canada
Proposed follow-up from the Roundtable on Religious Persecution
17 March 1999

1. That we ask the Minister to establish an Advisory Group on Elimination of Religious Persecution and Intolerance

Rationale:
Religious persecution, intolerance, and misunderstanding between religious communities are intensifying in the current environment. They play a growing role in issues affecting Canada's foreign policy. Neither governments nor faith communities can solve the problems on their own. Collaboration between the Canadian government and NGOs, particularly religious communities, is crucial. As well, the Canadian government and NGOs need to develop their ability to work effectively and knowledgeably in this area on the basis of a well-thought out strategy.

Purpose

(i) To increase the capacity of the Canadian government and of NGOs to act effectively and knowledgeably on the elimination of religious persecution and intolerance;

(ii) To identify key issues of religious persecution and intolerance on which Canada needs to be active;

(iii) To identify strategies for government, NGO, academic, and private sector action.

Makeup of the Group

Relevant government representatives (including people from HR, Industry and Trade and Security divisions of DFAIT; CIDA and geographic desk people as appropriate;

Representatives of religious communities

Academics in this field

Representatives of development organisations

Representatives of business community

Timeline

At least two years to get its recommendations together.

2. **That religious communities take initiative to strengthen their ability to support one another and to act effectively to eliminate religious persecution and intolerance.**

Rationale

Religious communities in Canada have worked on religious persecution/intolerance issues with their counterparts in other countries. We have not collaborated with one another within Canada. We need to know what is happening to believers in each others communities, to share resources, and to act collaboratively wherever possible. Our formal religious institutions[1] presently divide us along the lines of some of the divisions in the rest of the world. Therefore, we will need to find a table large enough for all religious communities that wish to participate.

Purpose

(i) To assist Canadian religious communities in deepening their knowledge of the situation of religious communities suffering from intolerance and persecution and in the human rights standards, instruments, and methods that can be most useful;

(ii) To develop the capacity of Canadian religious communities to engage governments effectively on this issue and to offer support to believing communities overseas.

Process

(i) Discuss the issue openly in each of our major faith organisations. (Christians need to do this in 2 steps: the Conference of Bishops and the United Church will undertake to take the issue to the Canadian Council of Churches; then the CCC and the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada churches need to look at the issue together.) Use the report of this Roundtable as a starting point.

(ii) Meet on an inter-faith basis.

[1] That is, the Canadian Council of Churches, the Evangelical Fellowship of Canada, the Canadian Jewish Congress, the Council of Muslim Communities, the Sikh Council of North America, and so on.

MakePeace International
Policy Recommendations for Sudan

The systematic destruction of life and community in Southern Sudan demands strong and decisive action by the international community. Humanitarian assistance is absolutely vital, but not enough to effect lasting change. The international community should not stand by while the Government of Sudan ruthlessly pursues its policies of destruction, not only of life and livelihood, but also of culture, language, community, religion and ethnic identity. Using the politics of hunger and the policy of slavery, this regime has sought to cripple the south into submission, creating misery of unimaginable proportions. It has also given rise to dangerous political instability in Sudan and in neighbouring countries.

It is therefore essential that the international community redouble its efforts to secure peace in Sudan and thus to avoid the continuation of the catastrophic loss of life, livelihood and liberty that has been continuing, virtually unchecked, for the last decade.

MakePeace International therefore calls on the international community, and in particular the member states of the United Nations Security Council, to prevail upon the Government of Sudan to cease hostilities against the people of the South and of the Nuba Mountains, the Blue Nile and the Beja territories, and to honour its voluntarily accepted human rights obligations to all its citizens. If the Government does not comply, MakePeace urges the international community to:

1. Build upon UN Security Council Resolutions 1044, 1054 and 1070 by imposing sanctions of increasing severity arms embargoes and air exclusion zones to diminish the NIF capacity to wage war against its own people.
2. Establish and ensure a monitored cease-fire, including cessation of aerial bombardment by the GOS, covering all areas and including all parties, for a long enough period to create confidence in the above negotiations.
3. Ensure strong condemnation by the UN Commission on Human Rights concerning all human rights abuses, and the establishment of human rights field operation, with significant financial and political support.
4. Initiate and fund a slave tracing program.
5. Appoint a Special Representative of the UN Security General to develop a strategic framework to provide a common focus to political, human rights and humanitarian objectives in North and South.
6. Insist that all parts of Sudan should be open to access by humanitarian aid organizations, especially SPLM/A-administered areas of the Nuba Mountains, Blue Nile and Upper Nile regions, and the areas of north-eastern Sudan administered by the Beja Congress.
7. Establish, as a matter of urgency, alternative mechanisms to cooperate with NGO's working outside the framework of the United Nations and ICRC, in order to enable emergency aid to be delivered to areas designated as "No Go" locations by the NIF regime. In particular, provide resources for medical supplies for organizations working outside the areas supported by United Nations Operation Lifeline Sudan program.
8. Strongly condemn Sudan's supply of weapons, bases and other support to the Lord's Resistance Army and intervene to ensure the freedom of all abducted children.

9. Maintain a watching brief on the impact of oil exploration and exploitation on the lives of those living in the oil rich areas of Bentiu and Abyie.

Acknowledgements:

Caroline Cox (President, Christian Solidarity Worldwide, UK)
Elizabeth Batha

CSW Trip Report, February 1999

Recommendations Regarding Religious Intolerance and Women's Human Rights
FOR THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT
a submission from Amnesty International
Canadian Section (English Speaking)

Framework for taking action against religious discrimination of women's human rights

Religious intolerance includes acts of discrimination or intolerance committed by members of a religious group, be they state authorities or private actors, against other members of their religious group or those outside the group. Currently, the mandate for the Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance incorporates the understanding that intolerance applies to acts within, as well as between, religious groups.

In his interim report (A/53/279 24August 1998), the Special Rapporteur states that "(p)riority consideration should also be given to the issue of how intolerance and discrimination based on religion and belief affects women because of their status as women. ...the Special Rapporteur considers that all manifestations of intolerance and discrimination against women should be addressed, from the obvious and manifest to the most obscure." (91) He also states that "(p)riority consideration should also be given to the issue of how intolerance and discrimination based on religion and belief affects women because of their status as women. ...the Special Rapporteur considers that all manifestations of intolerance and discrimination against women should be addressed, from the obvious and manifest to the most obscure." (91) He also states that "(r)eligious extremism, regardless of whether or not it has a genuinely religious basis, is apparent or latent, adopts, provokes or sustains violence or manifests itself in less spectacular forms of intolerance, constitutes an unacceptable assault on both freedom and religion. ...Tolerance of extremism is tolerance of the intolerable." (89). In situations of religious extremism women suffer intolerable violations of their human rights. The treatment of women in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Algeria are just a few examples of religious extremism that is denying women their fundamental human rights.

The Commission on Human Rights has also "called for government action to counter intolerance and related violence based on religion or belief including practices of discrimination against women and condemned acts motivated by religious intolerance in all its forms, including practices that violate the human rights of women and discriminate against women. (CHR Res. 1997/18).

States may impose restrictions on the application of religious law or practice where necessary to protect women's human rights. The UDHR (Article 18) protects the right to freedom religion which should prevent one religious group from dominating or oppressing the rights of another religious group. As well, this protection should prevent the commission of acts of intolerance and discrimination within a religious group that deters a member of the group from exercising their religious belief in the way that they choose. Both the ICCPR (Article 18(3)) and the Declaration on the Elimination of All Forms of Intolerance and of Discrimination Based on Religion or Belief (Article 1 (3)) permit governments to restrict manifestations of religions if the restrictions are:

1) established by law; and
2) necessary to protect public safety, order, health, or morals and the fundamental rights and freedoms of others.

Discrimination against women within their religious group contributes to a culture of discrimination in the lives of women within the wider community. Taking steps to ensure that discrimination does not occur within religious groups will assist in the establishment of an environment where all women's human rights are respected.

Action to End Violations of Women's Human Rights

Regardless of their political, religious or culture affiliation, state governments are fundamentally responsible for protecting and promoting the rights of women. Lack of action to protect women's human rights constitutes state complicity in the commission of a violation. Governments must enact laws and ensure that they are implemented to protect the rights of all their citizens. If governments do not condemn violations of women's human rights either by not investigating them, and not bringing those who committed the violation to justice, they appear to condone such acts.

Therefore, in the context of Canadian`s bi-lateral relations, the Canadian government should be encouraging and supporting states, where there is evidence suggesting the discrimination of women's human rights by religious communities, to engage in the following activities:

States should condemn violations of women's human rights and should not invoke any custom, tradition or religious consideration to avoid their obligations with respect to the elimination of violations of women's human rights.

States should ratify and implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women or withdraw any reservations to the Convention.

States should refrain from engaging in any violence against women.

States should exercise due diligence in preventing, investigating and, in accordance with national legislation, punishing acts that violate women's human rights whether these acts are perpetrated by the State or by private persons.

States should develop penal, civil, labour and administrative sanctions in domestic legislation to punish and redress wrongs caused to women whose rights have been violated.

States should develop preventative approaches to eliminate violations of women's human rights that promote the protection of women and ensure that the re-victimization of women does not occur.

Religious Extremism:

In situations of religious extremism such as the case of Afghanistan, the Canadian government and other governments are "...duty bound to condemn it unequivocally and combat it relentlessly." ((A/53/279 #89).

With regard to Afghanistan, the Canadian government should hold leaders of the Afghanistan's warring factions to account for their human rights abuses against women. The Canadian government should ensure that concerns for human rights in Afghanistan are not overshadowed by political, strategic and economic interests.

Special Rapporteur:

The Canadian government should support the work of the Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance by:

- ensuring that sufficient funds are available for the Special Rapporteur to fulfill his mandate.

- supporting (financially and otherwise) and encouraging other states to support, a study on religious extremism and that a minimum set of standard rules and principles of conduct and behaviour in respect of religious extremism be defined and adopted by the international community (A/53/279 #89).

- by providing funds and support to a seminar on the status of women from the viewpoint of religion that will be attended by the Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance, the Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women, and representatives of CEDAW, CESCR, Human Rights Committee, relevant UN agencies and relevant NGO (A/53/279 #91).

Cheryl Hotchkiss
Amnesty International
www.amnesty.ca

Paul Johnson
Open Doors with Brother Andrew

Open Doors with Brother Andrew is an International Mission, which for the past 44 years has been serving the Suffering Church Worldwide. We are specifically focussed in regions of the world where there is sustained persecution against people of faith. We presently minister in Asia, the Muslim World, Africa and Latin America.

Brother Andrew has championed the plight of the persecuted worldwide and has been an international speaker on behalf of the persecuted in most continents of the world and has sponsored significant conferences on behalf of the persecuted.

We also have a significant network of individuals throughout various regions, which allows us to have first hand knowledge of happenings concerning the persecuted. We do attempt with our limited resources to make the plight of the persecuted known and support a news service to assist in this area.

I would like to make a few suggestions for your consideration. I do not suggest that they be in any way perfectly formulated as far as precise and legal wording goes. Neither are they fully developed as to complete implementation at this point.

1. It would be good that there be a much higher profile given to religious persecution considering it involves hundreds of millions of individuals who suffer the minimum of harassment to martyrdom.
2. The establishment of a full-time desk within the department to deal specifically with the issue of religious persecution.
3. The establishment of an advisory committee made up of the participants at the round table with an executive advisory committee to be elected from these members to assist the new desk with information, resources, education issues etc.
4. The establishment of this committee to meet twice a year.
5. The establishment of a formal communication network for the purpose of sharing and processing of information concerning persecution. (Web-site, electronic communication.) A secure system also should be developed so that extremely sensitive or confidential information could be passed along to the department.
6. Criteria should be established concerning submission. Training by the department should be carried out so that reporting could be done to standards of department.
7. The department relies heavily on the United Nations for valuable information and reporting concerning religious persecution and possible suggestions for appropriate actions. With the vital importance of this issue and in some cases the urgency of a quick response to some of the issues steps should be taken to have a better first hand knowledge that is timely and action oriented.

   To facilitate this and the taking of appropriate immediate action the department should look at all areas of legislation and various international agreements with a view to changing any of the aforementioned so that Canada could respond immediately as deemed necessary.

An emergency Religious Persecution Response Team should be developed made up of an interdisciplinary group for the purpose of going to the field for first hand, accurate information and reporting back to the department. This team could consist of government personal, representatives from the advisory committee who have significant involvement in the region as well as invited individuals with the needed expertise to complete the task.

8. A full and comprehensive Canadian report on religious persecution should be issued annually. This report should include an overview and statistics but should also include some type of action suggestions for responding to the issues from the Canadian perspective.
9. Religious persecution issues should be always a high priority in any meeting of foreign dignitaries, with religious persecution issues consistently tied into all negotiations for trade, aid etc.
10. Concerning Sudan, the Government should request urgently that the Sudanese Government allow free and protected travel to an interdisciplinary team to investigate the true situation in Southern Sudan. They should be made aware findings of such team will be shared with the International Community with appropriate actions to be taken based on the findings. Perhaps our role in the support of Talisman should become a significant bartering chip in this issue.
11. Funding for ongoing research into religious persecution, causes, effects, as well as responses to this important issue should be made available. A cooperative effort of the government and agencies represented at the round table would be beneficial.

Thank you for the time you have given to this life-threatening issue. We will continue in the vital battle of assisting those who suffer by helping to meet some of the daily needs, make known their plight and working together with those of like mind in eradicating this unacceptable treatment of fellow global citizens

THE CANADA TIBET COMMITTEE :

The Canada Tibet Committee is an independent non-governmental organization of Tibetans and non-Tibetans living in Canada, who are concerned about the continuing human rights violations and lack of democratic freedom in Tibet. Its goals are to stop the ongoing destruction of the Tibetan culture, to alleviate the suffering of the Tibetan people and to restore Tibet to its status as an independent state within the family of nations. The Canada Tibet Committee is committed to the principle of non-violence and opposes the use of violence as a means of resolving conflict. The Canada Tibet Committee recognizes the Tibetan Government-in-Exile as the legitimate representative of the Tibetan people.

The Canada Tibet Committee publishes a daily electronic news report which is distributed worldwide and which is archived on our website www.tibet.ca.

RECOMMENDATIONS RE. PANCHEN LAMA :

1. The government of Canada is called upon to precondition any discussions on religious intolerance with the government of the Peoples' Republic of China, on the release of Gendhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama of Tibet, his family and members of his monastery in particular Chadrel Rinpoche.

2. Canada's human rights dialogue with China should prioritize obtaining reliable and substantiated information about the safety and whereabouts of Gendhun Choekyi Nyima, the 11th Panchen Lama of Tibet, his family and members of his monastery in particular Chadrel Rinpoche..

BACKGROUND RE. PANCHEN LAMA

On May 14, 1995, Gendhun Choekyi Nyima was proclaimed the reincarnation of the Panchen Lama by the Dalai Lama. (This tradition of Dalai Lama and Panchen Lamas proclaiming each other's reincarnations, has existed since the seventeenth century). Days later, on May 17, 1995, the six year old boy and his parents disappeared. They have been held in incommunicado detention ever since.

On May 28, 1996, China admitted at the United Nations, that the boy and his parents were being held in custody "for their own protection". Despite repeated appeals from the Tibetan Government in Exile, the United Nations and several governments, NGOs and other international bodies, China has refused to provide any information about the child or to allow an independent observer to see the boy and his parents or to confirm that they are alive.

Soon after the announcement on May 14, 1995, Chinese military were sent to Tashi Lhunpo Monastery - traditional seat of the Panchen Lama – where they carried out a series of arrests. Chadrel Rinpoche, then abbot of the monastery was detained on suspicion of having communicated with the Dalai Lama about the choice of the reincarnation. In April 1997, Chadrel Rinpoche was sentenced to six years imprisonment and deprivation of political rights for an additional three years on charges of "leaking state secrets".

At present he is held in a top-secret cell in Chuandong No. 3 prison in Sichuan Province. He is reported to be very ill and suffering the effects of torture at the hands of authorities.

To date more than 80 people have been arrested in connection with the Panchen Lama case.

-- end --

Voice of the Martyrs
Recommendations to DFAIT

A. That DFAIT make the issue in Sudan of highest priority and that public statements be made to the press and to the Sudanese Ambassador expressing Canada's outrage over the violation of basic human rights in Sudan and the criminal actions of the Sudanese military in attacking civilians targets such as feeding stations, hospitals, and refugee camps.

B. That the Federal Government immediately undertake to change the necessary legislation that hinders Canada's imposing of appropriate unilateral sanctions against countries such as Sudan, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia which blatantly violate basic human rights, such as the right to freedom of worship as guaranteed by the UN Declaration of Human Rights.

C. That DFAIT consider most seriously the well thought out recommendations of the Inter-Church Coalition on Africa in the their February 1999 report as follows (abbreviated) :

1. At the 55th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights, Canada should co-sponsor the resolution on Sudan as it has at previous sessions of the Commission. Canada also should closely monitor the drafting of the resolution to ensure that undeserved concessions are not made to the Government of Sudan for progress in the areas of respect for human rights, constitutionality and democratic development. A meeting should be held with the Special Rapporteur on Sudan, Mr. Leonardo Franco, to get his assessment of any claims made by the Sudanese government in these areas.

2. At the UN Security Council, Canada should use its good standing and influence to lobby Council members to consider a range of policy options to stop the genocide and end human rights atrocities in Sudan, and facilitate a peaceful resolution to the conflict. All actions should be undertaken in the context of and with clear reference to the IGAD regional peace process for Sudan, whose Declaration of Principles (DOP) remains the only viable framework for achieving a just and lasting peace in Sudan.

In particular:

- The UN should take a significantly more pro-active political role on Sudan, which would require, inter alia, a full-time Special Representative of the Secretary General. The envoy's activities should be designed to reinforce and complement the IGAD peace process for Sudan, including stimulating opportunities for shuttle diplomacy between rounds of negotiations.

- The UN should take robust action to negotiate full access of war-affected populations to humanitarian relief. The current restrictions, especially in the Nuba Mountains and Southern Blue Nile, are intolerable.

- In collaboration with IGAD, the UN should urge all parties to the conflict to establish an immediate and comprehensive cease fire throughout the country on all war fronts. The cease fire should include aerial bombing as well as ground military actions. Given that all previous cease fires have broken down, this cease fire should be monitored by a competent international monitoring team.

- Should the Sudanese government refuse to agree to a cease fire or fail to cease its aerial bombing immediately, no-fly zones like those imposed on Iraq and Kosovo should be established and enforced over all war fronts until, and for a reasonable period of time after, a comprehensive cease fire that includes the cessation of aerial bombing has been secured.

- The UN should ensure that the Special Rapporteur on Sudan has strong political support to monitor abuses throughout the country regarding human rights and international humanitarian law. If effective, this would keep pressure on all actors. The SR should have power to recommend appropriate action to the UN, Organization of African Unity, key donors and the members of the IGAD Partners Forum in response to violations.

- Major pressure should be applied to all parties in the conflict to uphold the Geneva Conventions which oblige them to respect minimum humanitarian standards. The UN and members of the IGAD Partners Forum must

make it known that the new International Criminal Court or a similar tribunal will be used to address war crimes and crimes against humanity. Foreign companies that work in Sudan and whose activities strengthen the capacity of the Government of Sudan to wage war should also be served notice that they could be indictable under the International Criminal Court or a similar tribunal.

- The UN should take every step possible to ensure that the Sudanese government does not renege on its pledge (invitation) to UNICEF to conduct an independent investigation into allegations of chattel slavery in Sudan.

3. The IGAD forum brings together only the SPLA and the Government of Sudan, but the conflict in Sudan involves other major parties including the Sudan Alliance Forces, Beja Congress and traditional opposition parties. The SPLA and GOS should be encouraged to adopt a policy of inclusion so that broader political and military interests are represented in the IGAD peace process.

4. The IGAD process should find a way to include local communities, refugees and displaced people in peace building.

5. The IGAD Partners Forum, of which Canada is a member, should give greater support to the preparatory work of individuals who are trusted by both the government and the SPLA and who are seeking to build up agreements between rounds of IGAD peace talks. The Forum should also seek ways to strengthen the capacity of IGAD (e.g. establish an operating secretariat) to ensure that the means exist to provide basic support for preparatory activities.

6. The IGAD Partners Forum should develop coherent and coordinated policies which, following a settlement, will facilitate Sudan's warring parties in building a stake in peace. These policies should include substantial post-settlement aid for reconstruction; future mechanisms for debt relief; normalization of trade, investment and diplomatic relations. Currently there is no official Western aid going to development in Sudan. Any offers of assistance must be calibrated with tangible progress on stability and security, respect for human rights, and demonstrated commitments to poverty reduction.

7. CIDA should shift its general policy orientation on Sudan from emergency relief to constructing and building capacity within civil society.

8. CIDA should support the further development of an autonomous civil society in areas of Sudan under rebel control (southern Sudan, Nuba Mountains, north eastern Sudan) and areas under government control.

9. Through the Peace Building Fund, CIDA should vigorously support indigenous conflict resolution and peace building initiatives in and for southern Sudan.

10. CIDA should engage the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade in a discussion about the issue of national sovereignty in Sudan, especially, how the Government of Sudan uses its right of sovereignty as a means of advancing its domestic political and military objectives resulting in gross and systematic violations of human rights including the use of food aid and famine as weapons of war.

11. The Government of Canada should explore options of ensuring that Canadian corporate investments in Sudan, during this time of ongoing civil war, are truly in the best interests of all Sudanese people and are not, as some Sudanese churches and international human rights agencies have said, strengthening the capacity of the NIF government to wage war against Sudanese civilians, southern Sudanese in particular.

12. Sudan should be added to the Area Controls List, like Burma, as a means of screening Canadian private investment in Sudan.

13. The Government of Canada should prohibit the use of Export Development Corporation programs for the support of any activities in Sudan until there is a significant improvement in respect for basic human rights in all regions of the country, verified by independent monitors.

14. The Government of Canada should oppose all loans and credits to Sudan by multilateral agencies until there is significant improvement in human rights protection.

The Canadian Coptic Association

Our Mission:

The Canadian Coptic Association is an organization that monitors the political , economic and social conditions which affects the Copts (Christians of Egypt) in order to identify , expose , and correct human rights abuses.

Our goal is to return Egypt to a peaceful equalitarian society in which the Coptic minority can exist without fear of religious persecution.

Submission to the Final Report for DFAIT on Religious Persecution a Coptic Perspective

Our Policy Recommendations:

1- **AID for Religious Freedom** : (our motto)

- Canada's AID programs should be directly made conditional upon enhancing/ improving Religious Freedom issues.
- Canada should develop protocols to make accountable the recipients of Canada's AID.
- Canada should develop a mechanism to verify compliance by AID recipients. [Canada may rely on the Canadian Copts Association (CCA) for verification, as the CCA has a well established structure of informants and "whistleblowers" inside Egypt]

2- **Canada's official recognition of the persecution in Egypt:**

It is imperative that Canada gives an official recognition to the fact that the Copts are facing persecution in Egypt.
This recognition should be translated into directives and policies for the two departments; namely; (1) Canada Immigration (2) The IRB.
It would also appear that both departments need to be informed and sensitized on the persecution of the Copts in Egypt.

3- **The Canadian Coptic Association be Canada's NGO in speaking for the Copts of Egypt and for acting as DFAIT's *"whistleblower"* on violations of the Copts Religious Freedom.**

The Canadian Coptic Association is well equipped to monitor and report on abuses of the Copts' religious freedom issues.

4- Canada should lead UN motions to make accountable those individuals; tyrants responsible for deciding on and / or carrying out atrocities and acts of persecutions.

The Coptic Association fully endorses the two following papers presented by Susanne Tamas, namely:

(One) President's Advisory Committee on religious Freedom Abroad; adapted to Canadian situation.

(Two) Strategies for consideration concerning Freedom of Religion and Belief.

EFC

THE EVANGELICAL FELLOWSHIP OF CANADA

130 Albert Street, Suite 1003, Ottawa, ON K1P 5G4 Ph: (613) 233-9868 Fax: (613) 233-0301

Recommendations to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Out of the Roundtable on International Religious Persecution sponsored by the Canadian Jewish Congress

March 25, 1999

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) is a national association of Protestant Christians. Our membership consists of 32 denominations, as well as numerous para-church organizations, local congregations and individuals. We are members of the World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF), an international association of some 115 national evangelical fellowships. Both the WEF and the EFC have established Religious Liberty Commissions to raise awareness among our members of situations of religious persecution internationally and to make representations to governments on behalf of those persecuted on the basis of their religion.

We wish to commend the Canadian Jewish Congress for organising the Roundtable on International Religious Persecution and The Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development and the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade for their support of the initiative.

We also commend the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Government of Canada for its support for a UN resolution on religious freedom.

As a result of the Roundtable presentations and discussions, we would make the following recommendations to the Department:

1) that the Canadian government use its position as member of the Security Council to advocate on behalf of the people of southern Sudan (more detailed recommendations to the Minister will follow directly);
2) that the Canadian government advocate for the release of the Panchen Lama;
3) that the Canadian government use its good relationships with countries such as Cuba, China, Egypt, India, Indonesia and Pakistan to advance the cause of religious freedom in these countries;

National Office: M. I. P. Box 3745, Markham, ON L3R 0Y4 Ph: (905) 479-5885 Fax: (905) 479-4742

4) that the Minister of Foreign Affairs facilitate the establishment of an advisory group on religious freedom which would include representatives from religious communities in Canada;
5) that the UN Special Rapporteur be invited to meet with the advisory body;
6) that the Department make religion part of foreign service officer training;
7) that Consular officials, officers charged with human rights, and government officials who deal with refugee and asylum claims be informed of the mounting evidence of religious persecution;
8) that the Department consider contributing to the development of a reference manual and Web site on religious freedom such as that proposed by Human Rights Internet.

We would welcome the opportunity to meet with the Minister and officials from the Department to discuss these recommendations and explore ways in which the EFC and its Religious Liberty Commission might work with the Department to further the cause of religious freedom internationally.

Respectfully Submitted.
Bruce J. Clemenger
The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada

Brief Introduction and Recommendations

'International Christian AWAZ, Canada', was established in August 1991.
International Christian AWAZ, Canada, is a non-profit Christian organization with branch offices in Brampton, Hamilton, Montreal, Edmonton.
Head office in Brampton, Ontario.
227 Vodden Street, P.O. Box # 23504, Brampton, Ontario L6V 1N2

'ICA, Canada', is a human rights group, with its main objective to bring to the worlds attention the violation of Human Rights in Pakistan.
The violation of human rights in Pakistan is religious based, and non-Muslims in Pakistan are not tolerated.
Our struggle is to fight against the atrocities committed, against the economically weak and politically powerless Christians in Pakistan.

Recommendations

1. Foreign aid should be tied to Human Rights.
2. Christian refugees from Pakistan, should be dealt fairly when they seek refuge in Canada.
3. The Canadian government should be educated re: Countries of severe persecution.
4. Government funded research cell should be established in Canada to independently research and submit reports to the department of foreign affairs.
5. A committee should be formed on a permanent basis with representatives from all countries where there is state sponsored persecution.
6. Meetings such as 'Round table on Religious Persecution', should be arranged more often.

It is a great feeling to part of a solution.

International Christian AWAZ, Canada
227 Vodden St. E.
P.O. Box 23504
Brampton, Ont. L6V 1N2

"The Canadian Government should support the creation of a website on religious freedom, so that information about this vital issue can be widely disseminated on the Internet, and used as a tool for advocacy as well as research."

"The Canadian Government should also support other projects in this area, such as the production of a *Handbook on Religious Rights and Freedoms* to empower NGOs and others to work more effectively for the protection of religious freedoms and to counter religious intolerance wherever it occurs."

3 York St., Suite 302
Ottawa, ON
K1N 5S6
CANADA

el. (1-613) 789-7407
ax. (1-613) 789-7414
E-mail: hri@hri.ca
http://www.hri.ca

RESOLUTION ON SUDAN
Submitted by Mel Middleton

Given the widespread reports and documentary evidence of human rights abuses in the Sudan, including forced religious indoctrination, religious persecution, ethnic cleansing, the bombing of civilians, attacks against non-combatants, slavery, and the denial of humanitarian assistance to selected population groups such as the Nuba, all of which amount to genocide by attrition; AND

Given that Canadian oil companies such as Talisman Energy Inc., through their commercial partnership with the Sudanese government, are providing direct and indirect support to the Sudan government, which could contribute to that regime's capacity to wage war and human rights abuses against its own people;

We call upon the Canadian Government to:

1. Use its position on the Security Council to ensure that the security of children and all innocent civilians in conflict zones in Sudan is guaranteed, and that unrestricted access to all areas of Sudan, including the opposition controlled areas of the Nuba Mountains is ensured for the UN and other international relief efforts;

2. Publicly acknowledge that what is happening in Sudan constitutes genocide, and that appropriate international action be undertaken based on the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide of 1948;

3. Commission an independent investigation into the role of Canadian oil companies vis a vis the extent of its impact in aiding the Sudan goverernment's ability to prosecute the civil war and commit human rights abuses against its own people;

4. Enact legislation and policies which will ensure that Canadian commercial activities are not contributing, either directly or indirectly, to acts of genocide;

5. Call for the placement of human rights monitors in all areas of civil conflict;

6. Call for the broadening of the IGAD peace peace process to include all parties to the Sudanese conflict and members from civil society, including academics, women's groups, trade union representatives, and church leaders;

7. Provide support for track 2 conflict resolution initiatives (such as the recent Nuer-Dinka Reconciliation conference sponsored by the New Sudan Council of Churches).

The following two documents were submitted by Susanne Tamas on her own behalf and not as part of any organization. These suggestions are not formal recommendations but rather were intended to stimulate discussion amongst the participants at the roundtable.

Strategies for Consideration
concerning
Freedom of Religion and Belief

Based upon needs identified in the Special Rapporteur's reports and the recommendations considered by the OSCE Human Dimensions Implementation meeting, the Roundtable participants might want to consider the following recommendations to DFAIT for its consideration or to be forwarded to other responsible federal government departments:

1. to offer to host a high-level intergovernmental meeting called for by Professor Amor to consider and arrive at a collective approach to sects and religions that respects human rights(Amor Jan. 1998 - para. 117);

2. to promote linkages with UNECSO and OSCE and other regional bodies in order to share findings and resources dedicated to Freedom of Religion and Belief, including the development of educational materials and methodologies promoting religious tolerance;

3. to expand the scope of the proposed broad based international civil society coalition to advocate for freedom of religion pursued by the governments of Canada and Norway to include the mandate to promote religious tolerance through education and to expand potential members to include other faith communities, human rights NGOs, academics, and development agencies and NGOs;

4. to offer financial support to the establishment of a UN sponsored comprehensive, multidisciplinary, international coalition of government and non-governmental representatives to monitor and make accessible the results of research on the root causes of and remedies for religious intolerance to be provided to the UN as a basis for sound analysis of the next steps to take in the protection of freedom of religion and belief;

5. to offer research grants to Canadian academics willing to study areas identified by the Special Rapporteur for Religious Intolerance and the OSCE Round table on Religious Freedom such as sects, religious extremism, state/church relationships; discrimination against women by virtue of their status within a religious community ...

6. to include education on human rights, including religious tolerance, in peacebuilding and development projects and refugee situations and to draw on the NGO community for its development and delivery;

7. through federal provincial consultations and the allocation of adequate resources, to remove obstacles that prevent Canada from responding in a timely manner to requests for information from the Special Rapporteur on Religious Intolerance; (Canada was not listed amongst the countries responding in the following reports of the Special Rapporteur: January 1998 Paragraphs 17 and 34; August 1998, para 6);

8. to review the President's Advisory Committee recommendations produced in the United States in order to to identify any that are relevant to the Canadian context; and,

9. to establish an advisory body to continue the consultative process begun today.

Note: These suggestions are not formal recommendations but rather are intended to stimulate discussion amongst the participants at the seminar.

President's Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad
Excerpts Adapted to the Canadian Situation

Advance religious freedom and oppose religious persecution as a foreign policy issue
Prime Minister should

- Deliver a major address explaining importance of religious freedom at home and abroad
- Give greater weight to religious freedom in issues considered in foreign policy decision making
- PM raise religious freedom issues in meetings with foreign leaders
- Instruct ADMs to give priority to supporting religious freedom policy
- Encourage greater dialogue among Canadian citizens on issues of religious freedom to encourage understanding, tolerance, and activities to end violations of religious freedom
- Direct additional funds to government agencies with this responsibility

DFAIT

- Instruct Embassies to give freedom of religion greater priority in their reporting of country conditions
- Assign more resources to support integration of Religious Freedom into foreign policy initiatives
- Establish an advisory committee from the Faith and Academic and NGO communities and meet twice annually to review religious freedom issues and take stock of foreign policy initiatives
- Incorporate Religious freedom in all appropriate high level meetings
- Speak out forcefully and frequently on instances of religious persecution and when religious freedom is violated
- Include Freedom of Religion in Human Rights training given to Foreign service officers
- Annual evaluations of DFAIT officials should include evaluation of their understanding of human rights, including religious freedom, and on their advocacy of human rights issues with foreign governments and their engagement with local religious and belief communities and human rights groups

Embassies

- Embassies should assign priority to investigating, monitoring and reporting on issues of religious freedom
- Adequate staff should be assigned in countries experiencing serious religious persecution
- Religious persecution should be discussed in ongoing contact with host governments
- Embassy staff should intervene on behalf of victims of religious persecution
- Embassy staff should establish relationships with religious leaders, groups and experts
- Embassy staff should be alert to religious discrimination and include it in country reports
- Embassy staff should be in contact with NGOs etc. and facilitate their access to difficult regions
- Embassies should allocate funds for groups that promote religious freedom etc.
- Embassies should press host government to give human rights monitoring groups access

Refugee Assistance

- Training of CIC personnel posted at Embassies overseas should include sensitization to all forms of religious persecution and other human rights issues
- Such training should include Refugee and Human Rights and Faith communities as appropriate
- Asylum and refugee personnel should be provided with updated information and refresher training
- Those making refugee determinations at home and abroad should be sensitized to credible fear as it relates to religious persecution

President's Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad
Excerpts Adapted to the Canadian Situation

Justice
- Accountability for religious persecution and other human rights abuses should be a cornerstone in rebuilding post-conflict societies
- Countries where the absence of rule of law has been responsible for religious persecution should receive assistance establishing the rule of law

Peace Process
Canada should
- Support, where appropriate, efforts of religious groups to protect human rights, encourage conflict resolution, promote reconciliation
- Support inter-faith initiatives

Multilateral Diplomacy
Canada should
- Continue to raise the profile of religious freedom at the UN GA and CHR through resolutions, statements, full integration of religious freedom considerations in UNCHR programs
- Strengthen the role of the UN High Commission
- Support the work of the Special Rapporteurs
- Call for annual reports by all states on contributions made to the promotion of religious tolerance

International Development
Canada should
- Allocate funds for projects promoting religious tolerance and freedom of religion and belief
- Ensure that CIDA funded human rights projects include religious freedom as a goal

Trade
- Information provided to businesses should include facts on country-specific human rights situations including religious freedom

Religious Communities
- Should be encouraged to cooperate with each other in areas of mutual concern
- Should be encouraged to enter into dialogue with each other and to establish contact with members of their same faith in different countries
- Should work to promote understanding of the religious freedom issue through the news media

OSCE
Freedom of Religion - Advisory Panel of Experts
Preliminary Report

15 October 1997 - Excerpts

1. Conduct a comprehensive survey of existing constitutional, legal and administrative procedures regarding freedom of religion by sending relevant questionnaire to participating states o f the OSCE and analyzing legal documents received

2. Undertake a study of comparative models of church-state society relations in the region in order to promote understanding of legitimate national differences and to identify fundamental principles, while simultaneously identifying standards that should be universally applicable to all

3. Compile and disseminate applicable religious human rights texts, and summaries of how they may be invoked

President's Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad
Excerpts Adapted to the Canadian Situation

OSCE Implementation Meeting on Human Dimensions Issues
Consolidated Summary - November 1998
www.osce.odihr.org/docs/consolid.htm

Recommendations from the discussion - excerpts

- that countries ensure that their legislation protects religious freedom and that it is drafted so that it has no negative consequences...
- that legislation balance respect for traditional, majority religions with protection of, and freedom for minority and non-traditional religious groups.
- that countries develop mechanisms to foster dialogue between governments and religious groups
- countries with compulsory military service should ensure that fair alternatives are provided to conscientious objectors.

APPENDIX II

Media Coverage

The Globe & Mail, March 18, '99

Ottawa, Calgary oil firm pursue peace in Sudan

JEFF SALLOT
Parliamentary Bureau, Ottawa

The federal government is soliciting the support of a Calgary-based oil company with major operations in Sudan to try to help make peace in the war-torn African nation.

The effort to bring a private-sector player into the diplomatic process is unorthodox, but one federal official says it's worth trying because so little else has worked during three bloody decades of civil war in Sudan.

Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy discussed the idea last Friday with executives of Talisman Energy Inc., one of the largest foreign oil companies operating in Sudan.

Nigel Hares, a Talisman spokesman, said the initial meeting went well and was just the start of what will be a continuing relationship with Ottawa.

In an interview, Mr. Hares said the company expects that "there will be ways we are going to work together on some issues that are as yet undefined."

Neither the federal government nor the company was prepared to discuss specifics yesterday. Mr. Axworthy noted that there is a crucial period between now and this summer, when oil producers will begin pumping crude oil through a new pipeline to Port Sudan on the Red Sea.

These shipments will be an important source of revenue for the Sudanese government.

Mr. Axworthy said the proposed partnership with the private sector is part of a broader peace initiative Canada is pursuing in co-operation with Norway and Kenya. The two countries have taken a special interest in the Sudanese conflict, and now see a glimmer of hope for peace negotiations.

Ottawa is trying to push the issue onto the agenda at the United Nations Security Council, where Canada is now serving a two-year term, Mr. Axworthy said.

He told a conference of human-rights groups that Canada has a special responsibility because Canadian companies are heavily involved in oil development in Sudan. The groups said they are concerned about the treatment of Christian minorities in southern Sudan by the government in Khartoum.

Mel Middleton, a representative of Freedom Quest International, blamed the Khartoum government for the persecution of Christian and other minorities and forced expulsion of minorities from areas where oil will be produced, and accused it of turning a blind eye to a slave trade that has sprung up in the midst of the civil war.

Mr. Middleton said recent statements by government leaders make it clear that they intend to use their new oil revenues to finance military operations against rebels.

He asked Mr. Axworthy to investigate the activities of the oil companies to make sure they are not "unwitting accomplices to genocide."

It was then that Mr. Axworthy disclosed his talks with Talisman. "They occupy a very strategic place in what will happen in Sudan," he said.

THE OTTAWA CITIZEN, MARCH 18, 99

Axworthy warns oil company not to fuel Sudan war

Calgary firm condemned by church groups for its part in 15-year battle

BY BOB HARVEY

Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy is putting pressure on a Calgary oil company condemned by church groups for fuelling the war in Sudan.

Mr. Axworthy yesterday told a seminar on religious persecution, held in Ottawa, that he spoke to officials of Talisman Oil last week and reminded them of the strategic place they occupy in Sudan, and their need to abide by the International Code of Conduct for Canadian Business. That code calls for businesses to demonstrate ethical leadership and to do business throughout the world in the same way they operate in Canada.

The foreign affairs minister also said he told company officials "we should begin looking at how we can work directly on problems (in Sudan) like child slavery and social breakdown."

Mr. Axworthy said the long-running war in Sudan and the increasing problem of religious persecution around the world "will be a major area of concern to myself and the government."

He said Canada has already begun canvassing fellow members of the UN Security Council in an attempt to find solutions to a war that has taken almost two million lives in the last 15 years.

Three weeks ago, the Interchurch Coalition on Africa asked Mr. Axworthy to screen Canadian private investment in Africa and ensure that Canadian firms do not strengthen the capacity of the northern Sudanese government to wage war against secessionists in southern Sudan.

Senator Lois Wilson, a former president of the World Council of Churches, spoke on behalf of the Interchurch Coalition and said Talisman Energy is helping to provide oil that the Sudanese government may be using in a war of genocide.

The Interchurch Coalition said it believes the oil is being used to fuel tanks, personnel carriers and planes that bomb hospitals and displaced persons camps in southern Sudan.

Last week, Ms. Wilson represented Mr. Axworthy as head of a Canadian delegation at Sudan peace talks conducted in Norway.

She also attended yesterday's seminar on religious persecution and said she agreed with Mr. Axworthy that the peace talks are making progress, and it is the wrong time to threaten sanctions against Sudan.

However, Ms. Wilson said that if no progress is made by April 15, Canada should consider putting pressure on Talisman to refuse to turn on the flow of oil until peace is achieved.

Talisman is in partnership with the Sudanese government and Chinese and Malaysian organizations in a development in southern Sudan that includes oil wells, a $600 million refinery and a $1 billion pipeline to Port Sudan on the Red Sea.

The refinery is expected to begin delivering 150,000 barrels a day this June and free up $450 million a year that Sudan is currently spending on oil imports. Sudanese government officials have said they expect the additional revenue to finance an end to the war in the south, which is costing it about $1 million a day.

Mr. Axworthy told yesterday's seminar that Canadian legislation does not currently allow the government to take economic action against Sudan or other countries unless it is in conjunction with an international group like the United Nations.

More than 40 academics, government officials and members of religious groups attended the seminar on religious persecution.

Held at the foreign affairs headquarters in the Lester B. Pearson Building, the seminar was organized by the Canadian Jewish Congress. Congress chairman, Rabbi Reuven Bulka, said Canadians need to co-ordinate their efforts with others and work toward ending a problem that takes about 200,000 lives a year in countries like Sudan, Pakistan and Tibet.

THE CANADIAN JEWISH NEWS, MARCH 31, '99

'Human security' focus of foreign policy: Axworthy

By DIANE KOVEN
Ottawa Correspondent

OTTAWA — Canada is not in a position to apply economic sanctions against Sudan, but there is still a possibility of stopping the war, according to Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy.

Speaking at a recent roundtable on religious persecution held at the Lester B. Pearson building, Axworthy outlined Canada's position, and described efforts to alleviate suffering in Sudan as well as in other war-torn countries around the world.

"Protecting and advancing freedom of religion is an intrinsic part of Canada's human security agency, and in our changing global context, this is more urgent rather than less urgent," said Axworthy.

"Canada has been reshaping its foreign policy to reflect the increasing human dimension of global peace and security. Many of the challenges we face as a global community, from violent conflict to newer threats – illicit drugs, terrorism or environmental degradation – have a more direct impact on the daily lives of ordinary people."

"Human security is providing both the focus and the impetus for global action. As a result, Canada has been taking a more human-centred approach to global relations in the initiatives we take, the themes we pursue and the methods we use."

The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, he said, is prepared to devote resources to exploring ways in which "information technology as well as improved networking, better reporting and enhanced information gathering, can all be developed and used more specifically as instruments to promote religious freedom."

The roundtable, attended by academics, government officials and representatives of a wide variety of religious groups, was organized by the religious and interreligious affairs committee of Canadian Jewish Congress, with support from the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, the Department of Foreign Affairs.

"A tremendous turnout from so many different communities, all under one umbrella, was in itself an eye-opener for many people," said Rabbi Reuven Bulka, chair of the committee and of the roundtable.

There were representatives of religious groups who said they had previously felt isolated, and were unaware that other groups were dealing with similar concerns.

According to Ron Singer, conference coordinator, many participants thanked Congress for providing an opportunity to meet and work with each other. "It was a great step in building a coalition," said Singer.

Paul Marshall, senior fellow at the Centre for Religious Freedom, Freedom House, Washington, D.C., discussed Canadian Policy Alternatives for Promoting Religious Freedom.

Lloyd Axworthy

Panelists who led a discussion on Case Studies in Religious Persecution were Susanne Tamas, speaking on the Baha'i in Iran; Ronald Schwartz, on Buddhists in Tibet; and Mel Middleton, on Christians in Sudan.

As a result of the meeting, a report will be submitted to the government.

Reluctant to call the roundtable a success until its results are known, Rabbi Bulka said, "We don't delude ourselves into thinking that the problems will be solved overnight. We know what happens when people stand by idly."

He is, however, optimistic that "we could have a very powerful voice in trying to get rid of the scourge that is affecting the entire world."

CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS • CONGRÈS JUIF CANADIEN VOLUME 3 NUMBER 4 • SUMMER 1999

DAIS

International Religious Persecution
Roundtable held in Ottawa

A heightened awareness within the national community of the scope of state-sanctioned religious persecution has fuelled the consternation of Canadians.

Among those present at the Roundtable on International Religious Persecution were (from left) the keynote speaker, Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Lloyd Axworthy; Rabbi Reuven Bulka, chair of CJC's Religious and Interreligious Affairs Committee; and CJC President Moshe Ronen.

To address this mounting concern, CJC's Religious and Interreligious Affairs Committee, with generous assistance from the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development, hosted a roundtable on March 17, 1999, in Ottawa. The day-long conference yielded policy recommendations on strategies for securing religious freedoms, which were in turn submitted to the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade.

Diverse human-rights NGOs and faith groups were assembled at the Lester B. Pearson Building, home of the Canadian Department of Foreign Affairs, for the purposes of sharing information and, possibly, of forming strategic coalitions. Rabbi Reuven Bulka, Religious and Interreligious Affairs Committee chair, suggested that "building coalitions is an excellent method of effecting change; the roundtable provides a forum that could act as a catalyst [for change]."

While acknowledging the variegated nature of religious persecution, panellists, noted experts in their fields, presented case studies of countries in which these practices are of a gross and systematic nature and either perpetrated or tolerated by the state. Paul Marshall, a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Religious Freedom at Freedom House in Washington, D.C, opened the session with an examination of Canada's policy on alternative means of promoting religious freedom.

A panel discussion ensued, featuring Susanne Tamas, Director of Governmental Relations for the Baha'i Community of Canada; Ronald Schwartz, Canada Tibet Committee member; and Mel Middleton, Director of Freedom Quest International. Their respective topics were the Baha'is in Iran, Buddhists in Tibet, and Christians in Sudan.

The keynote speaker at the event, Minister of Foreign Affairs Lloyd Axworthy, took to the podium following his introduction by CJC president Moshe Ronen. Mr. Axworthy remarked that the Canadian government has been reformulating its foreign policy to entrench its "human security agenda of protecting and advancing freedom of religion [as] challenges to religious freedom…cannot go unanswered by Canadians."

All participants in the conference concurred that Canada's status as a middle power, its reputation as an "honest broker" and its membership in the UN Security Council collectively enable the country to advance religious freedoms internationally.